INDIA
IN
1923-24

A Statement prepared for presentation to Parliament in accordance with the requirements of the 26th Section of the Government of India Act (5 & 6 Geo. V, Chap. 61)

BY

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Except where otherwise mentioned a pound sterling is equivalent to fifteen rupees. To minimise confusion the rupee figures are also given in important statistics. Three crores (30 million) rupees may thus be taken as equivalent of £2 million sterling; and three lakhs (3,00,000) rupees are equal to £20,000.

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India in 1923-24.

CHAPTER I.

India and the Nations.

The Great War has brought in its train many consequences both immediate and remote ; but it may be questioned whether any of these will be reckoned by the historian of the future so profound and so far reaching as the effect which it has produced on India. Prior to 1914, India, like the rest of Asia, had begun to feel restless beneath the impact of Western civilization. This civilization, for many years regarded as a phenomenon extraordinary and indeed superhuman in its omnipotence, had forfeited the glamour of novelty, and was now seen to possess the defects of its qualities. More important still, its mastery over material force had lost the inexplicable character which at one time distinguished it in the eyes of the people of the East. For the recent example of Japan, and her triumph in the war against Russia, had shown that Asiatics could themselves successfully emulate the hitherto unchallenged might of the Western world.

East and West.

These currents of opinion were of particular importance in India, which, after a century of British rule, had begun to react powerfully to the irritant provided by the presence of an alien and unassimilable civilization. While on the one hand, there arose a disposition to magnify the achievements of India in past ages, as a contrast to her position of inferiority in modern times, it was plain, on the other, that the material influences of Western civilization were lending to the peoples of the sub-continent a unity which had hitherto been lacking. Modern communications were breaking down age-long barriers ; an educated middle-class had sprung from the conditions of British rule, and was now discovering common aspirations expressed in the medium of a common language. As a result, this class began to dispute the right of foreign rulers, however praiseworthy their intentions or efficient their achievement, to control for ever the destinies of an ancient and civilised people numbering one-fifth of the human race.

India before 1914.

But before the outbreak of the Great War, the aspirations of the Indian Nationalist movement were comparatively restricted. With the exception of a small group, mainly nihilist in inspiration, which sought complete independence, the majority of the class interested in political progress were content to claim for their own countrymen a share in place and power. At home, there was little inclination to call for the disappearance of the British permanent official. It was to the monopoly of power, and to the control of policy characterising the bureaucracy, that objection was voiced. Abroad, the political horizon of India was limited to a consideration of the ties which bound her to Britain. Her principal anxiety was based upon the belief that the material resources of the Empire were being employed to maintain British administrators in the monopoly of a position which the sons of the soil were now rightfully entitled to share. But in consequence of the moral and material movements set in operation by the World War, a remarkable change came over the spirit of Indian Nationalism. The isolation which had formerly characterised the outlook of Indian politicians was now broken down, as the country found herself in the full stream of world affairs. In the prosecution of the struggle India became intimately associated with members of the British Commonwealth, who inferior to herself in population, in resources, and in continuity of culture, were nonetheless free nations enjoying complete control over their own destinies. The War gave to India two new conceptions, both of which were destined to exercise a profound influence upon her political future. The first was a new estimate of her potential importance in the civilised world ; the second, an enhanced perception of the rights and dignity of nationality.

The changing spirit.

Concurrently with this, there was an increasing realization on the part of Imperial statesmen of the significance of India to the British Commonwealth. The part which India had played in the War, and the assistance given to the Allies by her immense resources, imperfectly utilized as they were, came as nothing short of a revelation to many. This impression was deepened when, as a result of the Allied victory, it seemed probable that the storm-centre of the world would shift from West to East. Those who pride themselves upon an accurate perception of the future course of world politics, are beginning to envisage a struggle which shall be waged not between rival exponents of Western culture, but between whole races of mankind ; and, in fact, we can no longer deny that one of the gravest perils menacing humanity in the near future is the conflict between

men of different colours. Now the possibility of averting such a calamity is plainly increased if India, with her 320,000,000 of people, can be retained within the boundaries of the British Commonwealth of her own free will. Even apart from the influence which her population and her resources would wield when thrown into the balance on the side of world peace, her presence as a member of the greatest association of free nations which mankind has known, would unquestionably serve as a bridge across which the opposing cultures of East and West might advance to a mutual understanding.

Great as is the ideal embodied in this conception, it is by no means beyond the compass of practical politics. But it depends for its achievement upon the ability of British statesmanship to convince the Indian people that the satisfaction of their aspirations lies in this direction. Since the War, as a result of the two conceptions we have already noticed, the mentality of those who are leading the politics of India has undergone a remarkable metamorphosis. There has arisen a fixed determination to be content with nothing less than control over their own destinies ; combined with a burning resentment against any conditions which would seem to stamp Indians with inferiority to the free peoples of the world. The quick pride of a sensitive people has suddenly awakened to the fact that in the world's estimation, as evidenced in innumerable ways, their status falls far short of their measure of their own worth. The time has gone by when any useful purpose will be served by examining the justification of these feelings. We must notice that they not only exist, but are the dominant factor in the mentality of educated India to-day. They account for the impatience, for the failure to perceive the rapidity of the progress now being made in many directions, which competent observers have pronounced to be so characteristic of post-war India. Indeed, the more cautious say that the Indian intelligenzia exhibit the mentality of a traveller who is consumed with the desire to arrive at the end of a long and difficult journey. Every stage, no matter how essential, is a fresh grievance ; any obstacle, no matter how inevitable, an intolerable outrage ; every advance, no matter how noteworthy, is ignored and forgotten in comparison with the distance which has yet to be painfully traversed. For this reason, the progress achieved by India since the War, striking though it may appear to the unbiassed observer, has quickened rather than appeased the sense of unsatisfied desire.

The Mind of Educated India.

The future historian of the Indian nationalist movement will fail to convey an adequate conception of its intensity, if he represents it as

deriving its characteristic impetus from the exasperating inertia of reaction. In point of fact it is difficult to deny that India is advancing both rapidly and surely towards the goal which the intelligenzia desire, and only by comparison with their natural and inevitable impatience at the delays inseparable from the early stages, does the pace appear slow and hesitant. In the sphere of internal development, the policy of the British administration has been laid down once and for all as the progressive realization of responsible government of the kind enjoyed by the self-governing Dominions of the British Commonwealth. In the external realm, the association of India with the free nations of the Empire in successive Imperial conferences; the signature of the Peace Treaty by representatives of the Indian Government; and the representation of India in the Governing Body of the International Labour Office as one of the eight leading industrial nations of the world, mark a complementary advance.

India's progress.

These changes, as has already been indicated, have but served to point the contrast between the natural aspirations of India, and the imperfect measure in which these aspirations are at present satisfied. The impatient indignation which now characterises the political life of the country, is leading men to ask whether India can ever attain her rightful position within the ringfence of the British Commonwealth; and whether any misfortune that can befall a people may not ultimately be preferable to a position of inferiority at home, and of humiliation abroad. It must be noticed that the most considerable element of Indian political opinion has as yet no inherent desire to sever its connection with the British Commonwealth. There is a clear perception of the preponderating benefits, both material and moral, which their country derives therefrom. But apart from a tendency, natural to the prevailing mentality, to underestimate the reality of these advantages, the question is already being freely ventilated as to whether, assuming them to be reckoned at their highest possible valuation, they may not be purchased too dearly, at the cost of national self-respect. In India's present mood this question is likely to receive an answer based rather upon impulse then upon consideration. It is the task of British statesmanship—and there have been few heavier laid upon the shoulders of mankind—to convince India that whatever the remote future may hold for the Indo-British connection, there is room for her within the Commonwealth to rise to the full height of her national stature, and to attain those noble privileges, coupled as

Her Impatience.

they are with grave responsibilities, which the self-governing Dominions enjoy. In a later chapter we shall have occasion to notice the manifestation of India's changed mentality in the sphere of internal politics. We have here to examine its operation in the realm of International affairs.

Injuries to National Pride.

Much harm would be done by failing to recognise that the treatment accorded to Indians in certain of the self-governing Dominions, and in the Colonies, is not such as befits the dignity of a country whose destiny is on all hands admittted to be Dominion status. There are at present about one and a half million Indians settled in other parts of the Empire. The movement of emigration has, broadly speaking, been of two kinds. The first was that of unskilled labourers, either under indenture, as in the case of Fiji, Mauritius, Natal and the West Indies ; or under some special system of recruitment, such as was adopted in Ceylon and Malaya. The second is the spontaneous emigration of persons belonging to the classes of traders, skilled artisans, clerks and professional men. Where emigration of the first kind has taken place, emigration of the second kind has usually followed ; as the ex-indentured labourers and their descendants gradually form a community, they are joined by traders, who come primarily to serve their needs. Spontaneous emigration has however also taken place to countries where there has been no emigration under indenture. This is particularly true of the East African territories and of the Dominions with the exception of South Africa. The net result is that the large population of Indians overseas consists of men who represent a variety of walks of life and cannot, save by the veriest travesty of facts, be classed indiscriminately under the contemptuous appellation of " Coolie." While in certain localities these settlers are treated on an equality with citizens of self-governing countries, in others they have definite and well-defined grievances. The principal points at issue between India and those portions of the Commonwealth in which her nationals are treated on a basis of inferiority are, in general, the right of franchise and the conditions under which Indians can emigrate and obtain and retain domicile ; and in Africa further, the right of Indians to hold land, to enjoy trading facilities, and to escape from compulsory segregation. There is, of course, a manifest distinction in this respect between the self-governing Dominions and the Colonies. So far as the former are concerned, they themselves, since they enjoy control over their domestic affairs, are responsible for the manner in which the Indians within their confines are treated. But in the case of the Colonies, India takes Great

Britain to task for any inequalities of treatment regarding which her nationals may complain. An illustration of this distinction is provided by the matter of emigration. So far as the Dominions are concerned, this matter has for the present been settled. In the Imperial War Conference of 1918, there was passed a reciprocity resolution, which affirmed the right of each community of the Commonwealth to control, by immigration restrictions, the composition of its own population. Since such reciprocity was likely to bear more hardly upon India than upon other groups within the Empire, it was further recommended that facilities should be given to Indians for visit and temporary residence; that domiciled Indians should be permitted to bring in their wives and minor children; and any civic and social disabilities to which Indians resident in the self-governing Dominions were subjected, should be given early consideration. This position has been accepted by reasonable Indian opinion, which recognises that if the Dominions desire to exclude Indian immigrants it is within their power to do, just as it would be within the power of India to exclude immigrants from the Dominions. But in the case of territories which have not attained Dominion status, and are still under the direct control of the Colonial Office India is not prepared to accept the policy of exclusion. She claims those rights of immigration which are exercised by citizens of other parts of the Empire.

Immigration.

Apart from the question of immigration, there remains the further aspect of the treatment accorded to Indians already settled in other parts of the Commonwealth by the Government of the territories themselves. With the exception of New Zealand and Newfoundland, the Governments of other Dominions have for long subjected Indians resident within their borders to certain disabilities. Against these disabilities Indian opinion has protested with increased vehemence. In the Imperial Conference of 1921, the assembled Dominions' representatives, with the unfortunate exception of the South African delegates, agreed to a resolution which admitted in principle the entire justice of Indian claims. The Conference, while reaffirming its previous statement that every community in the British Commonwealth should enjoy complete control of the composition of its own population, recognised the incongruity between the position of India as an equal member of the British Empire, and the existence of disabilities upon British Indians lawfully domiciled in some other parts of the Empire. The opinion was therefore expressed "that in the interests of the solidarity of the British Commonwealth, it was desirable that the rights

Other Questions. Their.

of such Indians to citizenship should be recognised." At the same time a further advance of considerable importance from the Indian point of view was registered by the suggestion that India should negotiate direct with South Africa in regard to the position.

The Imperial Conference of 1921.

As a result therefore of the Conference of 1921, the principle of equality for which India is contending was conceded; while the institution of direct negotiation between India and a self-governing Dominion constituted a guarantee that the Indian case would be presented with all possible force and freedom.

At the meeting of the Prime Ministers and representatives of the Commonwealth in the summer of 1921, it was informally suggested that a deputation from India should visit Canada, New Zealand and Australia in order to consult with these Governments with a view to giving effect to the resolution. Accordingly, after this proposal had been officially endorsed, the Right Honourable V. S. Sastri, accompanied by Mr. G. S. Bajpai as Private Secretary, was deputed to visit Australia, New Zealand and Canada in May 1922. In Australia Mr. Sastri drew the attention of the Government to certain small disabilities which Indians share with other Asiatics. He succeeded in inducing the Queensland and South Australian Governments to remove some disqualifications which existed; but despite the expressions of sympathy evoked by his skilful advocacy of the Indian cause, no positive action was taken in respect of his demand for equality of franchise. In New Zealand, Mr. Sastri found that the conditions under which domiciled Indians live are as satisfactory as anywhere in the Empire; and he experienced no difficulty in coming to an understanding with the New Zealand Government upon certain small points which entailed negotiation. In Canada, he obtained an assurance from the Prime Minister that the consideration of Parliament would be invited to the request that Indians resident in Canada should be granted parliamentary franchise on conditions identical with those governing the exercise of that right by other Canadian citizens. But in British Columbia, where neither the Provincial nor the Municipal franchise is enjoyed by Indians, Mr. Sastri's representations achieved little success on account of the popular prejudice arising from economic rivalry between the white and non-white races. On the whole, it is not unfair to say that while as a consequence of the 1921 resolution, the justice of India's claim on behalf of her citizens resident in the Dominions—with the exception of South

Positive Results.

Mr. Sastri's Mission.

Africa—was freely admitted, several of the Governments concerned, either from apathy or as a result of local difficulties, did not succeed in carrying this resolution into effect.

The dissent of the South African delegates from the 1921 Resolution was particularly unfortunate, for two reasons. In the first place, the number of Indians who are subject to the Union Government amounts to no less that 160,000.

South Africa.

In the second place their position has for some time been wholly unsatisfactory from the standpoint of India. The trouble occurs principally in the Transvaal where Indians are politically helpless ; and in Natal where, though they possess the municipal franchise, their position has for some years been an object of serious attack. In the Orange River Province, where the number of Indians is minute, and in the Cape Province, where the policy prevails of equal rights for every civilized man, there have been no difficulties. Elsewhere, the trouble came to a head in 1919, when a decision of the Transvaal Provincial Court had endangered certain rights which it was understood had been secured by an agreement arrived at in 1914 between General Smuts and Mr. Gandhi. In the same year, anti-Indian agitation rose to such heights in South Africa that the Union Government appointed a commission to enquire into the question of Asiatics trading and holding land in the several provinces. Despite the efforts of the Government of India to secure the adequate presentation of the Indian case, the Commission recommended the retention of a law prohibiting the ownership of land by Asiatics in the Transvaal.

The right which Indians had previously enjoyed of acquiring and owning land in the Uplands of Natal was also threatened by a recommendation of the Commission. Against this latter proposal the Government of India earnestly protested, and it has not been accepted by the Union Government. A further success achieved by the Government of India lay in the fact that the Commission had declined to recommend compulsory segregation.

Anti-Indian Measures.

But feeling ran so high against Indians in certain parts of South Africa that persistent endeavours have been made during the last two years to endanger still further their already precarious position. In Natal, two ordinances were introduced of a kind wholly unacceptable to Indian sentiment. They were vetoed, however, by the Government of South Africa. During the year 1922-1923 renewed attempts were made to introduce them. The most important of these enactments was an ordinance dealing with the township franchise. It was reintroduced in 1922

and in a modified form in 1923. In each instance the Union Government withheld their approval, and gave proof of their desire that the utmost care should be exercised before any step is taken likely to affect the position of Indians in any part of South Africa.

The Class Areas Bill.

No small credit for the achievement of this result is due to the energetic representations addressed to the Union Government by the Government of India. During the period under review, however, an even more formidable danger menaced Indians resident in South Africa owing to the introduction by the Union Government of a measure entitled "The Class Areas Bill." This, though not specifically directed against Indians, contained provisions which could be used in urban areas for the compulsory segregation of Asiatics. Indian opinion was deeply agitated over the prospect of this legislation, which, in the existing state of public opinion in South Africa, might well have led to the utter ruin of many Indian traders at present carrying on their business in several Provinces of the Union. In response to the vigorous protests made by the Government of India, the Union Government gave an assurance that it was their desire and intention to apply the measure, if it became law, in a spirit of fairness to the interests and reasonable requirements of resident Indians. The Government of India, whilst welcoming the assurance, were unable to rest satisfied with this position. They put themselves at the head of Indian sentiment in the matter, and strenuously pursued every effort to persuade the Union Government to abandon the project. For the moment, in consequence of the unexpected dissolution of the South African House of Assembly in April 1924, the bill has lapsed.

Indians in the Colonies.

From a consideration of the position of Indians in the self-governing Dominions, we may briefly advert to the problems connected with their position in those portions of the Empire which have not obtained Dominion Status. In certain of the Colonies, Indians are under no political or legal disability of any kind, and possess the same opportunities of becoming members of elective bodies as any other British subjects. In the West Indies, for example, where in British Guiana, Trinidad, and Jamaica, there is a considerable Indian population, the position of an Indian is the same as that of any other British citizen. In Ceylon, under the revised constitution about to be issued, qualified British Indians will be eligible for the franchise without any discrimination on the ground of race. In Mauritius also, there is no adverse discrimination against Indians. In Fiji, however, the Indian population have distinct grievances. Their

principal demands are for more adequate representation upon the Legislative Council; municipal franchise based upon a common electoral roll; and a minimum wage fixed in the proportion to the cost of living. Recently, a new grievance has been reported, which is the imposition of a poll-tax on all males except Fijians. This poll-tax bears very heavily upon the numerous and economically hard-pressed Indian population. Both in Uganda and Tanganyika the position of Indians has been the cause of some anxiety. The Government of India has been compelled to enter strong protests against various projects for the treatment of Indians. In Uganda these protests have succeeded in deferring proposals for segregation. In Tanganika, where large numbers of Indians have purchased ex-enemy property, three ordinances were introduced in 1923 imposing certain fiscal and linguistic obligations which aroused resentment among the Indians resident in the territory. The Government of India took up the matter with the Colonial Office, and the question of introducing amendments calculated to safeguard Indian interests was considered.

Kenya.

But by far the most formidable problem arising out of the position of Indians in the Colonies is presented by the situation in Kenya. That Colony owes much to Indian labour, and Indian capital; Indian settlers have played a very large part in its development; and they largely out-number the European population. Nevertheless for some time they have been labouring under notable disabilities, some of which are resented from the slur which they cast upon India's self-respect, while others impose very practical and positive hindrances upon Indian prosperity. In the first category may be placed a prohibition against the transfer to Indians of agricultural lands in the highlands of the Colony. As these lands are at present entirely held by Europeans, the question of their ownership by Indians is of sentimental rather than of practical importance. On the other hand, the inadequate representation of the Indian population upon the Legislative Council; their political helplessness despite their large stake in the economic life of the Colony; and the difficulty which has been threatened in the way of free immigration, have long been matters of the very gravest concern. During the years 1921 and 1922, race feeling between the Indian and the European settlers rose to such a height that the relations between the two communities became extremely strained. The dominant position of the Europeans led the Indians to fear lest proposals for compulsory segregation, for the denial of the franchise,

The Indian Grievances.

and for the total prohibition of immigration from India, should be forced upon them. Indian sentiment, not merely in Kenya but in India itself, was deeply stirred by what was regarded as a deliberate attempt to stamp Indians with the seal of racial and social inferiority. It would be difficult to exaggerate the influence exerted of late by the Kenya situation upon Indian political sentiment. The Indian intelligenzia, without regard to political divisions or party aims, stood as one man to resent the slight cast upon their country, and to demand in the strongest terms the vindication of what they regarded as the elementary rights of their nationals in Kenya. Public meetings were held all over the country; the Indian press, both vernacular and English, expressed itself in the most vehement language; addresses were presented to the Viceroy by public bodies of all shades of opinion, as well as by the Indian Legislature. The Government of India from the first put themselves at the head of Indian sentiment, representing to the Colonial Office continually and in the most emphatic terms the seriousness, from the Indian point of view, of the Kenya situation. Early in 1923, the Colonial Office invited the Governor of Kenya, accompanied by delegations representing both the European and Indian communities, to proceed to London for the purpose of discussing the terms of a final settlement. The Chambers of the Indian Legislature sent their own deputation, consisting of two members of the Assembly, and one of the Council of State, to co-operate with the Kenya Indians, and to exercise all possible influence in their support. The Government of India meanwhile put up a strong fight, warning the Secretary of State that if the decision went against the Indians in Kenya, there would probably arise a stror g agitation for the severance of India's connection with the British Commonwealth, and for the adoption of retaliatory measures against the Colonies.

Feeling in India.

While the case was still under consideration in London, rumours reached India that an adverse decision had been arrived at in the matter of the highlands and the franchise. On July 21st in consequence of the wide-spread anxiety which was aroused, a resolution was moved and carried in the Legislative Assembly recommending the Governor General in Council to move His Majesty's Government to concede the claim advanced by the Indian residents in Kenya. Almost simultaneously an influential deputation of the Council of State approached the Viceroy with expressions of alarm as to the consequences which might ensue if Indian claims were not admitted.

Anxiety in India.

Within the next week the decisions of His Majesty's Government (contained in Cmd. 1922) were announced by Reuter. The main decisions may be summarised as follows :—

Decision of His Majesty's Government.

It was laid down that the general policy to be observed in Kenya was the protection of the paramount interests of the African population. It was considered that the existing system of Government was best calculated to achieve this aim ; and the immediate grant of responsible Government which had been urged by the White settlers, was considered to be out of the question. But contrary to the opinion expressed by Indian sentiment, a decision was arrived at in favour of communal representation. This system, under which the Indian community was to have five elected representatives in the Legislative Council was regarded as best in the circumstances, because it was compatible with African representation in due season, and with Arab representation immediately. It would further permit of a wide franchise for Indians. The policy of segregation as between Europeans and Asiatics in townships was, in deference to Indian opinion, to be abandoned. On the other hand, the reservation of the highlands for Europeans was to be maintained. On the vital question of immigration, it was laid down that legislation discriminating against Indian entry into Kenya could not be countenanced ; but this statement of principle was qualified by the suggestion that some further control to protect the economic interests of the Africans was required.

Resentment at the Decision.

The strongest resentment was aroused in India by the announcement of these decisions. Adjournments both of the Council of State and of the Legislative Assembly were proposed to consider the situation. A Bill to regulate the entry into and residence in British India of persons domiciled in other British possessions, was introduced, considered and passed by the Legislative Assembly in one day as a protest against the recent decision. In proroguing the Assembly on the following day, Lord Reading defined the attitude of the Government of India in the clearest terms. He said "The news of the decision regarding Kenya came to me and to my Government no less than to you as a great and a severe disappointment ; for India had made the cause of Indians in Kenya her own. As His Majesty's Government has stated, this decision conflicts on material points with the strongly expressed views of my Government as laid before the Cabinet by the Secretary of State for India. India's representations were fully placed before His Majesty's Government, and re-

ceived most patient and careful consideration; but we must record our deep regret that His Majesty's Government could not feel justified in giving greater effect to them. We are conscious that there were important aspects, perhaps not sufficiently understood by us, which His Majesty's Government were called upon to weigh and to determine, and we fully appreciate and acknowledge their hearty efforts to arrive at a fair and equitable conclusion. They have announced their decision, and the Government of India must consider it, and arrive at its conclusions; if submission must be made, then with all due respect to His Majesty's Government, it can only be under protest." In August 1923, the views of the Government of India were again set forth at length. While acknowledging the difficulty of the issues, and the care and attention that His Majesty's Government had devoted to India's claims, they did not conceal their feeling of disappointment at the result; and they reserved the right to make further representations with a view to reopening these decisions when a legitimate opportunity offered.

Lord Reading's Speech.

Most fortunately, this opportunity was not to be long delayed. While India was consumed with anxiety as to Kenya affairs, preparations were already being made for the meeting of the Imperial Conference of 1923. In the first revulsion of feeling against the Kenya decision, many influential sections of Indian opinion expressed the view that India's participation in the Imperial Conference was an insult to her self-respect.

Bitter feeling in India.

The deep emotion aroused by that decision, combined with the indignation caused by the treatment of Indians in South Africa, stimulated anti-British feeling to remarkable heights. To the determination never to acquiesce in a position which exposed India to such humiliation, there was added despair of getting justice from the British Commonwealth. And when in addition to all these considerations it was found that the draft agenda of the Imperial Conference contained no mention of the position of Indians overseas, except the comparatively insignificant phase represented by their position in the C. Mandated Territories, the demand that the Indian delegation should refuse to take part in the Conference became widespread.

The Imperial Conference of 1923.

It was extremely fortunate that Lord Peel, as head of the Indian delegation to the Conference, was able to associate with himself two such men as Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and the Maharaja of Alwar.

Work of the Indian Delegation.

From the moment of his arrival in England, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru laboured devotedly and successfully to arouse both His Majesty's Government, and the British people to a realization of India's indignation and despair. He encountered many difficulties, among which may be mentioned particularly the preoccupation of His Majesty's Government with affairs in Europe ; and the general indifference of the average Englishman towards India, which was a consequence of the lamentable boycott of the visit of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales by the leaders of the Non-Cooperation movement. Nevertheless, with the support of the Secretary of State, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru succeeded by degrees in arousing a sympathetic interest in the difficulty under which India is labouring. His Majesty's Government committed themselves to a recognition of India's right to be heard, by setting aside a whole day, in the already crowded programme of the Imperial Conference, for the discussion of the question of Indians overseas. On October 24th the matter was formally taken up ; and so important was the discussion judged to be, that it was resumed on Monday 29th, and was not finally concluded until Wednesday 31st. In consequence, not only did the Conference itself devote a larger proportion of its time to a discussion of Indian grievances than that which was allotted to any other subject on the agenda ; but in addition, the attention of the British press and of the British public was directed to these subjects for something like a full week. Quite apart from the positive gains which accrued to India as a result of the decision of the Conference, the advantage she derived from the new and comprehensive interest aroused in her situation among the public of Great Britain, must be counted among the most important results of the session.

Their Advocacy of India's Cause.

When the Conference came to consider the question of Indians overseas, Lord Peel, as leader of the Delegation, opened the case for India. He dwelt upon the unanimity of Indian opinion, and the justice of the Indian cause. He also cited India's great actual and potential importance to the Empire as an argument for the expediency of meeting her rightful demand. Lord Peel was followed by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, who recounted the depth to which Indian opinion had been stirred, and described the intolerable humiliation under which she laboured through the treatment meted out to her nationals in other parts of the Empire. He put forward an eloquent and reasoned appeal for the execution of the 1921 Resolution, adumbrating a machinery for consultation between the Government of India and the Dominion Governments on

the question as to how best and how soonest effect might be given to it. He vigorously controverted a memorandum circulated to the Conference by General Smuts, which had attempted to disprove the connection between Imperial citizenship and the exercise of civic rights. This memorandum, which had further proceeded to suggest that the Conference would be well advised to rescind the 1921 Resolution, did not survive Sir Tej Bahadur's spirited attack. Turning to the Kenya question, Sir Tej Bahadur amplified the observations already made by the Secretary of State for India, forcibly drawing the attention of His Majesty's Government to the sinister effects which this decision had already exercised upon the Indian political situation. After briefly referring to the grievances of Indians in other colonies and protectorates, he pleaded powerfully for an examination of the whole question, in consultation with the authorities concerned, by a committee to be appointed by the Government of India. In the case of the Union of South Africa, which was not a party to the 1921 Resolution, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru expressed the hope that the Government of India might be allowed to maintain an agent who would serve as an intermediary between Indian nationals and the Union Government.

The Replies of the Dominions.

After the representations of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru had been eloquently reinforced by the Maharaja of Alwar, the various Dominion delegations made their replies. The Prime Minister of Canada observed that in eight out of the nine Provinces of the Dominion, Indians did not suffer any legal or political disability. In the ninth Province, British Columbia, he stated that the present difficulties in conceding the franchise to Indians were due not to distinction of colour, but to complex economic and political considerations. The question whether natives of India resident in Canada should be granted Dominion parliamentary franchise on the same terms as native Canadians, was necessarily one for Parliament alone to determine. He promised that the matter would be submitted to that body for consideration when the Franchise Law came up for revision. He was somewhat doubtful whether the solution of the problem would be facilitated by the visit of a committee appointed by the Government of India ; but readily agreed to appoint a committee to confer with the committee from India, if such a step were desired.

Canada.

Australia.

The Prime Minister of Australia stated that representatives of every shade of political thought in his country had shown sympathy with the claim that lawfully

domiciled Indians should enjoy full citizen rights. He felt that in view of this position, there was no necessity for an Indian Committee to visit Australia, but he gave an assurance that on his return to Australia he would consul this colleagues as to the implementing of the 1921 Resolution. The Prime Minister of New Zealand welcomed the visit of a committee from India, stating that his country already practically gave resident natives of India the same privileges as those enjoyed by the Anglo-Saxon race. The Prime Minister of Newfoundland made plain that there was no distinction whatever between Indian British subjects and other citizens, either in the matter of emigration or in the matter of the franchise. Mr. Desmond Fitzgerald, the Minister of External Affairs in the Irish Free State, also expressed sympathy with the Indian claims. It was from South Africa that the only note of dissent emanated. General Smuts held out no hope of any further extension of the political rights of Indians in the Union, and expressed himself as unable to accept Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru's proposal. So far as the Colonies were concerned, the Secretary of State, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, cordially accepted the scheme of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru that there should be full consultation and discussion between the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and the Committee appointed by the Government of India, upon all questions affecting British Indians domiciled in British Colonies, Protectorates and Mandated Territories. More important still, while reminding the Conference that the British Government had recently come to certain decisions as to Kenya, and stating that he saw no prospect of these decisions being modified, the Colonial Secretary promised to give careful attention to such representations as the Committee appointed by the Government of India might desire to make to him. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, however, again made it plain that the recent Kenya decision could not be accepted as final by the people of India.

New Zealand.

Newfoundland.

Irish Free State.

South Africa.

The Colonies.

The results of the Imperial Conference were from the point of view of India extremely important. The 1921 Resolution had not only been secured from the attack which the South African delegation levelled against it, but had been emphatically endorsed. All the Governments represented, with the exception of that of South Africa, were again united with the Indian representatives in support of the principle

Results of the Imperial Conference.

embodied in that resolution—a great moral success for India. Perhaps more immediately important was the fact that the Government of India were now given the opportunity they had been seeking of reopening the Kenya question. This last point is of considerable moment in the light of subsequent events.

The Position in Kenya.

Following upon the Kenya award, statutory action was shortly taken by the local administration on the franchise question. Adult suffrage on communal lines was conferred upon Indians. It will still be open, however, for the Government of India Committee to make representations for an increase in the number of seats allotted to Indians, and for the registration of all voters on a common electoral roll. Lord Reading has announced that the Government of India will continue to press their views through the constitutional channel open to them as a result of the Imperial Conference. Further, as regards immigration, the Government of India took the opportunity to urge the postponement of the bill giving effect to the decision of His Majesty's Government until such time as the Colonies Committee should have an opportunity of examining the question of the restrictions therein embodied. The introduction of the bill was postponed at the instance of the Colonial Office; and the Government of India received an assurance that ample opportunities would be afforded for the expression of their views; and that earnest attention would be given to any representation which the Colonies Committee desired to make.

The Colonies Committee.

Indeed, there can be no question that the whole position as regards Indians in the Colonies has materially changed, owing to the acceptance by His Majesty's Government of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru's proposal for a consideration of the question by a committee appointed by the Government of India. Towards the close of the period covered by this report, the committee was constituted under the presidency of Mr. Hope Simpson, M.P., who is widely trusted in India both from his consistent friendliness to her national aspirations, and also from his stout championship of her cause at the time of the Kenya decision. Its other members were His Highness the Aga Khan, Sir B. Robertson, Diwan Bahadur T. Rangachariar, and Mr. K. C. Roy. This Committee has now completed its work in England. The Government of India anticipate nothing but good from the investigation of the problem of Indian nationals overseas by discussions between this Committee and the authorities concerned. And when further it is remembered that in the Imperial Conference, the Pre-

miers of no fewer than four Dominions exhibited the deepest sympathy with Indian feelings, and expressed their earnest desire to remove the disabilities of Indians resident within their borders, it is difficult to deny that the gains of India at the 1923 Conference were considerable. But it was hardly to be expected, in view of the mentality now characterising the Indian intelligenzia, that any considerable degree of satisfaction would be either experienced or expressed. Full allowance must of course be made for the fact that India was in the throes of an election; so that there was a natural tendency on the part of that important section of Indian opinion which did not agree with the political policy of the group of which Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru was the most prominent figure, to underestimate achievements which were largely in the nature of a personal triumph. But it must not be forgotten that India is now somewhat weary of conferences and committees, and in her present distrustful mood, she is inclined to look upon them merely as devices for postponing the consideration of awkward questions. It says a good deal for the general acumen of Indian politicians that no inconsiderable section of persons who did not agree with Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru's views on domestic politics, were found to maintain that a real advance of the most valuable character has been registered by the proceedings of the Imperial Conference.

India's Gains.

Among the many consequences of India's desire for Dominion status is an increased sensitiveness on the part of her intelligenzia regarding the emigration of labour, either skilled or unskilled; for it is now realized how severely the national dignity of India has suffered in the eyes of the rest of the world owing to the fact that the Indian labourer, or coolie as he is contemptuously designated, has been taken as representative of the entire population of the country. The spokesmen of educated India are now convinced that the whole question of emigration to other parts of the British Empire requires careful control. In deference to this feeling, the assisted emigration of unskilled workers from India has for some years been forbidden, except in the case of Ceylon, the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States. During 1922 the policy of the Government of India was embodied in a new Emigration Act, which provided that assisted emigration for the purpose of unskilled labour is unlawful except to such countries, and on such terms and conditions as the Governor General in Council may specify. The Act further provides that any notification made under it must be laid in draft before

Emigration Questions.

and approved by, both Chambers of the Legislature. In consequence, the organized emigration of unskilled labour can now be regulated and controlled by the popular representatives. A standing Emigration Committee composed of twelve members of the Indian Legislature, of whom four are members of the Council of State, and eight are members of the Legislative Assembly, was appointed to advise the Government of India on all major emigration questions. The first standing Emigration Committee defined the terms and conditions which were considered appropriate to Ceylon, the Straits Settlements, the Federated Malay States and Mauritius. It seems certain that the effect of associating Indian public opinion with the Government of India in exploring and redressing the grievances of Indian emigrants is destined to lead to a material improvement in the conditions under which unskilled Indian labourers work in other parts of the Empire. An example of this is to be found in the improvements which have taken place in the conditions of labour in Ceylon. At the same time, it is to be noticed that there was a tendency on the part of the first Legislative Assembly to pitch very high the terms upon which Indian labour might be admitted to certain colonies. The knowledge that the consent of an elective legislature is vital to the existence of Indian emigration, is bound to exercise a liberalising influence upon the labour regulations of those colonies which need settlers from India. It would be regrettable, however, if this tendency were carried to a point at which the interests of Indians already resident, who fear the competition of fresh arrivals, should operate to the damage of intending settlers. As a practical example of the interest taken by the Indian Government and Legislature in the fortunes of Indian settlers overseas, may be cited the fact that in 1922, two deputations left India for Fiji and British Guiana, for the purpose of ascertaining by local enquiry whether these colonies offered land suitable for Indian settlement. The report submitted by the Indian deputation to Fiji is still under consideration; but the reports of the British Guiana deputation have been published. In the latter case, the two Indian and the one European, members submitted recommendations which differ in one material point. The Indian members considered that no speedy resumption of emigration should be countenanced until the British Guiana Government had found a satisfactory solution for various points in which they considered the existing condition of Indians unsatisfactory. The European member considered that regulated emigration should be allowed in quantity fixed with reference to the demand for labour and the level

Legislative Control.

of wages. Since the publication of the Committee's report, a deputation from British Guiana has arrived in India to discuss with the authorities the conditions under which the resumption of emigration could be sanctioned.

Seriousness of Indian Sentiment.

It will be plain, from what has been said in the foregoing pages, that the whole question of the position of Indians overseas has now assumed an importance so vital in the public life of the country that the bitterness therefrom resulting threatens to poison the springs of goodwill between India and England. This question affects all classes; it unites all political parties. Enemies of the British connection point to it as a standing example of what they term "white arrogance" and racial intolerance. The disabilities to which Indian nationals abroad are subjected strike Indian opinion as an intolerable affront. The depth of this feeling can be gauged when it is realized that India depends upon the Imperial connection for certain vital elements, the importance of which can scarcely be overestimated, in her safety. She is unable at present, and can hardly hope in the immediate future, to defend herself either by land or by sea, against an aggressor. A consideration of the problem of India's defence will serve to reveal by implication the strength of a sentiment which would sacrifice even national security itself, if the price to be paid for security is humiliation.

India's Past Sufferings.

The history of India contains ample proof that the defence of the country has been fraught both with difficulty and with danger in times past. Some authorities have gone so far as to say that India's national story is one long record of invasions. This statement is somewhat exaggerated but contains an element of truth. There can be no question but that India has suffered immense damage, both moral and material, in past times, from invasion of her land frontiers. Not once, but on many occasions have masterful peoples, of civilization less advanced than her own, poured through her northern passes, overthrown her indigenous dynasties and postponed for centuries her efforts at self-unification. Since India has become a member of the British Commonwealth, she has known security from invasion. But it is important to remember that geographical facts are well-nigh unalterable; and that those natural entries which in times past have facilitated the advance of invading armies into the heart of the country, still remain unchanged.

For a country which possesses a land frontier over six thousand miles in length, India is comparatively well sheltered, but there are joints

in her armour. On the North the barrier of the Himalayas protects her from invasion; and only by the Chumbi Valley Pass is there any access between India and her neighbour Tibet. The general condition of this country is still rather mediæval than modern. There have of late been certain movements on the part of a progressive party under the leadership of the Dalai Lama. Attempts have been made to modernise the equipment, and increase the strength of the army, but social and economic conditions remain feudal in type, and the forces of conservatism are very strong. In this connection it is interesting to know that towards the end of the period under review, the Tashi Lama, who appears to have opposed certain of the schemes of the reforming party, fled from his province and crossed the frontier in disguise.

The Northern Frontier.

Tibet.

As is well-known, the relations between India and the neighbouring State of Nepal have been for more than a century of the friendliest character. In December 1923, a new treaty was signed between the two countries, whereby each agrees to inform the other of any friction or misunderstanding with the States in territories adjoining their common frontiers. The British Government agrees that Nepal should be free to import through British India arms, ammunition and warlike material, so long as the British Government is satisfied that the intentions of the Nepal Government are friendly. The Nepal Government in its turn agrees that the export of arms and ammunition across its frontiers shall be prohibited. Other articles of the Treaty provide for the free passage through the Indian Customs of goods imported under the mark of the Nepal Government. The new Treaty is an interesting illustration of the cordial relations which exist between the two parties; and India may congratulate herself upon the proximity of an ally, at once so friendly and so helpful, as Nepal.

Nepal.

To the North-East, while there are some practicable passes upon the frontier of Assam, the difficulty of the country militates against the possibility of serious invasion. The frontier of Burma, however, marches some thousand miles with that of China, and is not entirely deficient in communications fit for bodies of civilized troops. During the course of the year under review, the peace of this section of frontier was threatened by nothing worse than occasional rumours of impending incursions from the borders of Mongmao and Chefang. A Burma Frontier Service has

The North East Frontier.

been created for the protection and civilization of the tracts which adjoin China. The state of lawlessness in Yunnan has increased through the present unsettled condition of the Chinese Empire; and brigand bands are numerous. Until such time as the Central Government of China is strong enough to reassert its authority over the outlying provinces, minor incursions into Burmese territory are always possible. But the official relations between British and Chinese administrators remain cordial; annual meetings are held on the frontier for the adjustment of claims made by the subjects of each country.

The North West Frontier.

While it would be a mistake to ignore the military problems of the North and North-East Frontiers, it is to the North-West that the eyes of India are as in times past principally turned. Here lie those Passes through which the tide of invasion has periodically flowed with disastrous effects. Time after time these incursions have shattered into fragments the attempts of successive empires to create a national unity in India. At the present moment, when new ideals of nationhood are inspiring the educated classes in all parts of India, the necessity of peaceful development, undisturbed by invasion from the North-West, is generally realized. For Central Asia is a great home of predatory peoples, warlike and formidable, who would ask nothing better than the opportunity of enriching themselves at the cost of the laborious and peaceful population of Hindustan.

Central Asia and the Soviet Government.

The delay in the settlement of the peace terms between Turkey and the Allies served to increase in this region the prevailing restlessness, which was largely exploited by the Government of Soviet Russia for its own ends. After the revolution of 1917, many portions of the old Tzarist Empire took advantage of the administrative breakdown to constitute themselves into separate states, but in the course of the succeeding four years the Soviet Government proceeded to overthrow the new political units of Dagestan, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia, and to regain control of Russian Turkestan by crushing the Khan of Khiva and the Amir of Bokhara. These states were granted nominal autonomy as Soviet Republics within the Russian Federation, but in actual practice were ruled so harshly that a succession of insurrectionary movements broke out. The Mussalman peoples of Central Asia soon realized, despite the efforts of the propagandists, the essential incompatibility between the tenets of Islam and those of Bolshevism. Hence, while Soviet rule is now, broadly speaking, accepted over the old Russian

provinces in Central Asia, the Bolsheviks have failed to enlist the enthusiasm of their Mussalman subjects in the spread of Communist doctrines. During 1922, there was formidable rebellion in Ferghana and Eastern Bokhara, headed by Enver Pasha, late Minister of War in Turkey. After a good deal of hard fighting, the Soviet authorities succeeded in crushing the movement and in killing its leader. Russian domination over Bokhara is now once more firmly established, though considerable unrest still prevails, and the country is in a disturbed condition. But in Khiva a fresh insurrection has broken out, and early in 1924 there were reports of heavy fighting between Bolshevik troops and organized rebel bands. It is of course to be anticipated that the Soviet Government will eventually reassert its authority, as indeed it is determined to do.

Russian Designs and Difficulties.

The flood of anti-British propaganda directed against impressionable points on the perimeter of the British zone, in connection with which His Majesty's Government protested so vigorously early in 1923, seems to be inspired quite as much by the desire of maintaining and extending Russian influence as by an determination to foster the spread of communism. During 1923 it was remarked in well-informed quarters that there was quite as much fanaticism in Moscow on the subject of alleged British machinations in Persia and Afghanistan, as there was in London on the question of Russian propaganda in Asia. The traditional ambitions of Russia in that quarter find now as in times past their principal obstacle in the British Commonwealth. And since the existence of this alliance of nations constitutes the greatest enemy to the spread of the doctrines of the Red International, it is easy to understand the hostility which has of recent years inspired Soviet statesmen in their fiery denunciations of Great Britain. At the time of writing, Russia has but partly made good the chaos into which her Asiatic possessions fell as a result of the administrative breakdown consequent upon the revolution. She has, however, succeeded in extending her influence into Chinese Turkestan, with which province she hopes to conclude a trade agreement; and she has also added Outer Mongolia, over which Chinese hold has relaxed, to the list of the Soviet Republics under her domination. So long as the relations between Russia and Great Britain were confined to the Trade Agreement, it was impossible to undertake that frank and free discussion of conflicting interests which may normally be expected to characterise the diplomatic relationship of friendly states.

But now that the Soviet Government has been formally recognised by His Majesty's ministry, and arrangements have been initiated for the settlement of questions outstanding between the two countries, it is sincerely to be hoped that the dangerous mutual suspicions characteristic of the last six years, will once more give place to a satisfactory understanding.

This unfriendly feeling has lately exercised an unfortunate influence in two distinct spheres, namely, Turkey and Afghanistan. As a result of the Greek invasion of 1920, the Nationalist Turks under the leadership of Mustapha Kemal Pasha turned for assistance to Russia. They received assistance in the form of supplies and munitions, which enabled them to evade the danger of a crushing defeat at the hands of the Greeks, and was thus partly responsible for their triumph in the following year. The old friendliness between Turkey and Great Britain had naturally received a severe blow from the suspicion that His Majesty's Government were encouraging the Greeks in their enterprise; and the advantageous position in which Russia now found herself was employed further to widen the breach. This of course reacted unfavourably upon the relations of His Majesty's Government with the Mussalman population of India, who were heart and soul with the Turks in the prosecution of their war of independence. Fortunately, after the debacle of the Greek Army in the autumn of 1922, the machinations of those who desired to involve Great Britain and Turkey in hostilities were frustrated by the tact of the local Commanders. The way was now opened for peace; and a conference of the Powers met at Lausanne on the 20th November 1922. The Allies, who throughout acted in close concert, showed their willingness to grant to Turkey very substantial concessions; but the draft peace terms presented at the end of January were not in all respects satisfactory to the Angora Government. The actual rock on which the split took place was the question of economic concessions, in which France and Italy were interested rather than Great Britain. So far as Great Britain herself was concerned, the only outstanding question, that of Mosul, was being reserved for separate discussion. But the chief British representative at the Conference found himself unable to accept a suggestion which would be deterimental to the unity of the Allies. The Conference at Lausanne accordingly broke up and the Turkish delegates took back to Angora the draft peace terms. A series of counter proposals were presented to the Allies early in April and on the 23rd of that month negotiations were renewed at Lausanne

Soviet influence in Turkey.

Peace Negotiations.

The actions of some hotheads in Turkey and Greece brought about periodic crises; but these events failed to interrupt the smooth and friendly progress of the Conference. The question of the Ottoman Debt, which was of interest to France rather than to Great Britain, came at one time near to causing a deadlock, but all parties were actuated by a desire for peace; and the Allied willingness to compromise enabled all difficulties to be surmounted. On July 24th 1923, peace was finally signed; and the Angora Government having ratified the Treaty on August 23rd, all Allied troops left Turkey within the next six weeks.

From the purely Indian standpoint the adjustment of relations between Turkey and England is a cause of much satisfaction. Indian Mussalmans have for some time regarded the Turks as the leading Islamic Power; and religious sentiment was greatly excited by the prospect of the extinction of Mustapha Kemal Pasha's nationalist movement. Of late however, it has begun to dawn upon Indian Mussalmans that the aims dominating the new Turkish Government are more national than religious in inspiration. The deposition of the Sultan in 1922 and the election of his nephew Abdul Majid Effendi as Khalifa, but not as Sultan, came somewhat of a surprise to the Indian Mussalmans, for it implied that vaticanization of the Khilafat which Indian theologians had stoutly maintained to be foreign to the doctrines of Islam. Towards the end of 1923, the Angora Assembly definitely decided to constitute itself into a Republic, with the result that the Khalifa found his power and prestige considerably restricted. Early in 1924 this step was followed by one which came as a most severe shock to Muslim opinion outside Turkey, and more particularly in India. The office of Khalifa was abolished by decree of the Angora Assembly, and the existing incumbent, with all his dependents, was expelled from Turkish territory under circumstances of considerable harshness. From these events it is perfectly plain that the newly constituted national Government of Turkey is determined to follow its own line, regardless of outside influences which may be brought to bear upon it.

Their Success.

The New Turkey.

The second region in which Russian influence has operated in a fashion hostile to British interests is that of Afghanistan. The hostilities with India into which the present Amir plunged shortly after his accession to the Throne, provided the Soviet Government with an opportunity of which they did not fail to take advantage; and in the summer of 1921 a Russo-Afghan Treaty was ratified. Perhaps the most signi-

Soviet influence in Afghanistan.

ficant portion of this Treaty, from the Indian standpoint, was the permission to establish Russian consulates at Kandahar and Ghazni. From these points of vantage it might well have been possible to prevent the transformation of the hostile spirit then existing between Afghanistan and India into the amity and friendliness which was to the advantage of both parties. But the Amir of Afghanistan had no mind to function as a pawn in the hands of Russia. He refused to give free transit through his country to Bolshevik agents ; and he shortly concluded a treaty of neighbourly relations with Great Britain. Moreover, he gave an assurance that Russian consulates were to be excluded from the neighbourhood of the Indo-Afghan frontier.

The Amir's Attitude.

Under the leadership of His Majesty the Amir Amanulla, the principle preoccupation of his country is to strengthen her own resources. For five years the present Amir has been engaged in a far-reaching programme of reform and progress. Steps have been taken to control and limit the arbitrary authority of local officials. The army is being largely reduced ; and the money once spent upon it is being diverted to other channels. Experiments are being made in Customs and Revenue regulations to explore more efficient methods of taxation. Attempts are also being made under Government subsidy to find fresh markets for Afghan produce; and advantage is being taken of the establishment of missions or legations at Teheran, Angora, Moscow, Berlin, Rome, Paris, New York and London, to despatch trade agents whose business it is to explore the possibilities of developing the commerce of the country. Moreover, Afghan students are being sent to France and Germany for study ; while French professors, German engineers, and Italian doctors, and other experts have been invited by the Amir to assist in the work of progress.

The New Afghanistan.

The new era in British relations with Afghanistan was initiated early in 1922 by the appointment of an Afghan minister at the Court of St. James and a British minister at the Court of Kabul. The Amir has displayed a disposition towards strengthening the bonds of friendship between himself and Great Britain ; but his difficulties are great. It is impossible to introduce far-reaching reforms into a polity organized on traditional lines without a certain disorganization of which lawless elements do not fail to take advantage. In the middle of 1923, reports were current of a somewhat widespread outbreak of general unrest in many areas ; and it is plain that the Kabul Government has been exposed to many

Anglo-Afghan Relations.

domestic tribulations. Unfortunately, the period under review, has not been free from troublesome incidents between Afghanistan and India. In June 1923 an Anglo-Afghan Trade Convention was, it is true, successfully concluded. This put into formal shape the obligations accepted by the British Government under the Treaty of 1921 in respect of goods in transit through India to Afghanistan. But two months previously, aerial operations directed by British forces against the Tazi Khel in the hills north of Dardoni, at a point where the Afghan boundary is not sharply defined, had resulted in an accidental violation of the frontier and in the infliction of casualties upon Afghan subjects. As a result of the elucidation of the facts through a joint enquiry held by officials of the Afghan and British Government, His Majesty's Government expressed in June through the British Minister at Kabul their unqualified regret at the incident. Full compensation was paid for the loss of life and damage to property. But in other incidents in dispute during the period under review, it was the British Government who were the aggrieved parties. Two events which had taken place towards the end of 1921, known as the Barshore and Spinchilla incidents, remained outstanding against Afghanistan. In the former, the culprits were Shahjui Wazirs, all armed outlaws from Waziristan, who had settled down in Afghan territory. In November 1921 they raided into Baluchistan and overwhelmed by superior numbers a detachment of Indian troops under two British officers. In the Spinchilla incident, which took place in the succeeding month, a convoy was attacked, and in the fight both British troops and outlaws sustained heavy casualties. Towards the end of 1923 the Afghan Government settled the demands put forward by Great Britain in regard to both these incidents. The rifles and machine gun captured by the raiders were replaced; and since compensation for private losses caused by the operations of the gangs had already been given, the international incident successfully terminated. But further difficulties arose in the course of 1923 on account of the attempts of various ruffians, who had committed brutal crimes in India, to find a safe harbourage in Afghan territory. On April 8th 1923 Majors Orr and Anderson of the Seaforth Highlanders were shot dead, some three miles from Landi Kotal, in the Khyber Agency, by two relatives of the notorious Shinwari raider Multan, who had been killed in the Peshawar district as long ago as

The Trade Convention.

Violation of the Frontier from the air.

Barshore and Spinchilla Incidents.

The Landi Kotal Murders.

1908. The murderers, who were Afghan subjects, were arrested by the Afghan Government in consequence of British representations. Unfortunately, while awaiting trial at Kabul, they escaped from jail. This created a most unfavourable impression; and the British Minister at Kabul lodged with the Afghan Government a most energetic protest. The circumstances were complicated by the fact that on the night of April 13th one Ajab, a Bosti Khel Afridi, who was "wanted" for stealing arms and for other misdemeanours, entered the Kohat cantonment, and after callously murdering the wife of an English staff officer, abducted his daughter as a hostage with which to bargain for his own safety, and conveyed her to the Orakzai Tirah. The kidnapped girl was recovered uninjured; but Ajab with three companions fled to Mandatai in the Afghan province of Ningrahar. Here they were joined by Daudshah and Ardali, the murderers of Majors Orr and Anderson. In reply to the representations of the British Government, the Afghan Government admitted its obligations to take such overt action as would convince His Majesty's Government of their determination to prevent the Kohat gang from endangering the peace of the Indian border from any refuge in Afghanistan. But unfortunately its action proved at first abortive, and meanwhile further outrages were committed. In the early hours of November 8th the desperados made their way into the house of Captain Watts, of the Kurram Militia at Parachinar, and endeavoured to abduct Mrs. Watts as a hostage for their own redemption. Being frustrated by the gallantry of Captain Watts, they killed both husband and wife, and returned to their base at Mandatai. As may well be imagined, the perpetration of this terrible crime aroused the utmost excitement and indignation. There was a general failure to estimate at their true value the difficulties to which the Afghan Government is exposed in taking effective measures against refugees in the inaccessible mountains just across the Afghan border. The newspaper press both in India and in Engand somewhat increased, by the tone of its comments, the intricacies of a delicate situation. On the one side, the firm representations of the British Government as to the responsibility of Afghanistan for putting an end to this reign of terror were distorted into a provocative "ultimatum" wantonly delivered to a Government which was labouring, in the fact of many obstacles, to carry out its international obligations; and on the other hand, charges were levelled against the Afghan administration for its alleged incitement of the desperados in their career of crime. Fortunately, the

The Kohat Outrage.

The Crime at Parachinar.

extremists on either side were equally wide of the mark. His Majesty's Government combined with vigorous representations the exercise of patience and forbearance. The Afghan Government successfully overcame the difficulties with which it was faced through the lawless conditions and general fanaticism prevalent among the tribes in the region where the murderers had taken refuge. In January 1924 the Afghan troops despatched against Ajab and his fellow criminals, aided by the mobilisation of an Afridi lashkar on the British side of the line, were successful in persuading certain of the desperados to surrender. Almost at the same time Ardali, one of the two murderers of Majors Orr and Anderson, was shot dead by an Afghan soldier in attempting to escape. Ajab the Kohat murderer has been deported to Turkestan with two of his companions by the Afghan Government under the guarantee that he will be kept in strict surveillance within a circumscribed area.

British Representations and Afghan Action.

The action taken by the Afghan Government was received with great relief throughout India. For there is little doubt that the respite, however unavoidable from the Afghan point of view, which the Kohat murderers had enjoyed, was very damaging to good relations between Britain and Afghanistan. For while British public opinion was indignant at the delay which enabled the murderers to commit fresh outrages, the Afghan Government felt itself affronted by the fact that a consignment of arms intended for Afghanistan had been held up in Bombay, under the provisions of the Anglo-Afghan Treaty, till such time as His Majesty's Government was assured that the Afghan Government was not pursuing an unfriendly and provocative policy towards Great Britain. It is hardly necessary to add that the mere possibility of a rupture between Great Britain and Afghanistan excited the strongest feelings in Russia; indeed, while the negotiations with the Afghan Government were still in a somewhat critical stage, the news was published in Moscow that a British ultimatum had actually been delivered. It is greatly to be hoped that with the resumption of customary diplomatic relations between Russia and Great Britain, public opinion in either country will be less susceptible to the influence of inflammatory rumours.

General Relief.

The difficulties of India from the North West frontier are not confined to her international relations. Between the Durand line which marks the Afghan frontier, and the provinces of British India, there lies a tract of territory which, though part of the Indian Empire, is not directly administered by the Government. Here dwell in rocky and desolate

fastnesses a number of warlike tribes who eke out the meagre subsistence their lands afford by raiding their more prosperous and peaceful neighbours. Their martial spirit, and their fierce devotion to what they understand of the Muslim faith, make them formidable antagonists, while their barbarity and savage independence constitute a standing menace to the security of India. It is the presence of these potential enemies within her borders, a permanent advance guard, as it were, of invasion, which rivets the eyes of India upon her north-western frontier.

General situation on the Borderland.

The general disquiet of the Islamic world in the Middle-East has naturally exercised a disconcerting influence upon the Indian borderland; but with the gradual adjustment of friendly relations between Great Britain and Afghanistan on the one hand and Great Britain and Turkey on the other, there have been gratifying symptoms of greater tranquility. Another external irritant, which is communist propaganda, is still active at the moment of writing. Its principal distributing centre is the colony of Hindustani fanatics at Chamarkand, who have established a connection with the tribes of the Dir and Hazara border, and endeavour to spread among them Bolshevik doctrines under a pan-Islamic cloak. In so far as the efforts of the Colony are stimulated financially and otherwise, by Russian diplomacy, it is to be hoped that this source of their encouragement will dry up as soon as relations between Great Britain and the Soviet Government assume a more normal character. It is indeed very important from the Indian standpoint that the tribes of the North West Frontier should be free from the operation of external intrigue. Economic pressure of itself makes them restless enough, and the only hope of relieving it lies in the preservation of a peaceful atmosphere. At the time of writing, the general situation throughout that restless portion of India which divides the territory under direct British administration from the Afghan frontier, is more satisfactory than at any time during the previous four years. Only now, indeed, are the tribes really settling down to their normal life, after the constant state of unrest which has prevailed along the length of the border since the outbreak of the Great War.

Different Regions present different problems.

Broadly speaking, the North-West Frontier of India may be divided into three principal sections. The first extends from the territory North of the Kabul river to the borders of Waziristan; the second includes Waziristan itself, the third comprises Baluchistan. Each

of these three sections presents an entirely different problem to the officers of the Political Department, whose duty it is to influence the inhabitants in the direction of peace and order. To the South of Waziristan, in Baluchistan, there is no tribal territory between British India and Afghanistan. The British authorities administer right up to the Afghan frontier. The tactful control of the tribes presents few difficulties ; and the country is steadily advancing towards prosperous order. In the section of the border North of Waziristan, the relations between the local inhabitants and the British Government are also on the whole satisfactory. North of the Kabul River, a great part of the territory is governed by important chieftains, such as the Mehtar of Chitral, the Nawab of Dir, and the Mian Gul of Swat. However much these rulers may fight among themselves, their interests are all on the side of peaceful and friendly relations with the British Government. Trade with India is active ; and the Swat River Canal provides a competence for many sturdy persons who might otherwise eke out their subsistence by raiding. Further South, in Tirah, the Afridis and the Orakzais have far too intimate connections with the territory directly under British adminstration to risk hostile action against India on any but the most serious grounds. But in between the northerly and the southerly sections of the frontier lies the central, namely Waziristan. Here conditions are quite different. The country is inaccessible to a remarkable degree ; the inhabitants are virile, but bloodthirsty savages who from time immemorial have supplemented the wholly inadequate resources of their sterile country by raiding, robbing and murdering. Ever since the British Government inherited from the Sikhs the task of controlling Waziristan, this area has presented the most formidable problem of the whole frontier. For many years attempts were made to follow the policy of non-interference. With the exception of granting subsidies to enable the chieftains to keep their younger warriors from raiding, and of maintaining posts garrisoned by locally recruited militia, the British adminstration has had as little as possible to do either with the country or with its inhabitants. But the hope that if they were left alone, they would leave British India alone, proved fallacious. On an average, their repeated misdeeds necessitated active operations of major or minor importance every four years. Since 1852 there have been 17 of these operations, and since 1911, four. All were occasioned by deliberate provocation on the part of the tribesmen, who have ravaged the plains whenever they saw the opportunity. Alike during the Great War, and during the Afghan hostilities of 1919, their depredations grew

bolder than ever ; and after the signature of the peace treaty with Afghanistan, they refused the lenient terms offered them by the British Government. Part of the difficulty in dealing with the inhabitants of Waziristan lies in the fact that the tribesmen themselves acknowledge practically no authority. It is therefore extremely hard to build up law and order, as has been done elsewhere, on the prestige of local chieftains. The tribesmen have nothing to lose, and everything to gain by disorder ; and unless effective pressure can be brought to bear upon them, it seems difficult to imagine that they will ever abstain from raiding.

The Problem of Waziristan.

Since the last Afghan War, the problem of Waziristan has forced itself upon the attention of the British authorties. As a result of punitive operations undertaken during the year 1920, British troops were firmly established at Ladha in the heart of the Mahsud country. But the question remained as to how Waziristan was to be settled. It may be mentioned that there are two main schools of opinion in connection with frontier policy. One of these, which is generally known as the forward school, would advocate the gradual advance of the area administered by Britain until the frontier of Afghanistan is reached. Only by so doing, say the advocates of this policy, will it be possible so to develop the sterile country in which the tribesmen dwell, that they may attain the wherewithal to live without raiding, and thus become possessed of a real stake in the maintenance of orderly and peaceful conditions. The second school of opinion is that known as the "close border." It advocates the retirement of our forces to positions within the directly administered districts of British India ; and the erection of some modern equivalent to the Great Wall of China, for the confinement of the tribesmen inhabiting the territory between these administered districts and the frontier of Afghanistan. Lines of barbed wire linking up posts strongly held ; mechanical transport roads running right along the border ; constant patrols, and wireless communications, they urge, represent the only practicable means of preventing destructive raids into the settled districts of British India. It is impossible to enter fully into the arguments which are cited by the advocates of either school. Both can claim some very strong points ; both seem open to serious objection. For while on the one hand the cost of such an advance as the forward school advocate would be entirely prohibitive, it seems doubtful on the other hand whether the erection of a barrier between British India and tribal territory would not result, even

Two Schools of thought.

if it afforded a respite from tribal raids, in a legacy of infinitely worse trouble in the future. Such a policy of negation might in reality leave the tribesmen free to brew incalculable mischief, while affording an open invitation to continual intrigue on the part of influences, whether foreign or domestic, hostile to the peace of India. It is interesting to find that the Government of India, after mature consideration, have adopted a policy situated between the two extremes. While on the one hand they are determined to bring the Mahsud country, the strategic heart of Waziristan, under control, they have decided that the military occupation should cease. It is replaced by a system of internal control, based partly on scouts with British officers, and partly on Khassadars, locally recruited levies who find their own arms and equipment in return for a monthly wage. This system is reinforced by external supervision from the two posts of Manzai and Razmak, which, though outside Mahsud territory, effectively control it. Razmak, which we occupy at the request of Utmanzai Wazirs themselves, in addition to constituting a dominant strategic position, is an almost ideal location for regular troops, being healthily situated 7,000 feet above sea level. But an integral part of the present policy is the construction of roads through regions hitherto almost impenetrable. A mechanical transport road links up Razmak to the Tochi on one side, and to Jandola on the other. Another road is under construction from Jandola to Sarwekai. Regular troops have now evacuated the Mahsud country. It is hoped, while freeing the Mahsuds from the irritant provided by the presence of troops within their border, to rob them of the inaccessibility which has caused their persistence in barbarism. The construction of some one hundred and forty miles of road in Waziristan will provide the channels through which civilization may gradually penetrate. Although protected throughout the greater part of their length only by scouts and Khassadars, it is reported that the roads already constructed are beginning to carry the trade of the country, and to exercise a pacific influence. The Government of India believe that in thus opening up Waziristan, and enabling a greater degree of civilization to find its way to these inaccessible tracts, they have discovered the best solution of the Waziristan problem.

The Compromise.

A brief survey of the border from North to South will give the reader some idea of the actual situation which obtained during the period covered by this report. Taking first the country North of the Khyber, it may be noticed that the personal ambitions of the chiefs of the Yusufzai tribes, living in the

Conditions during 1923.

basins of the Swat and Panjkora Rivers, have resulted in a continual state of war. The two leading rulers, the Nawab of Dir and the Mian Gul of Swat, have now concluded their war of 1922 for the possession of Adinzai, a province on the left bank of the Swat River, close to the British bridgehead of Chakdarra. The result of the contest was the victory of Dir. No sooner was the war concluded, than the Mian Gul looked elsewhere in order to increase his sphere of influence. Buner, to the East of Swat, met with his approval and he proceeded to invade the country. He now rules virtually the whole of Buner, North of Kabulgram on the Indus River. In their relations with the British Government, the behaviour of the tribes was good; and the Nawab of Dir undertook at our instance to refrain from aggression against the new sphere of influence of the Mian Gul, as a price of his own recognition as master of the Adinzai tract. The British Political Agent was moreover successful in enforcing the exclusion from Sam Ranizai of outlaws who had been accustomed to harbour there, and harry certain villages of the Peshawar district. The Utman Khel, and the Mohmands, also committed no serious offences, despite the sinister influence of the hostile Hajji of Turangzai, whose presence constitutes a perpetual threat to the tranquility of this portion of the border; while in Bajaur the death of the Babra Mullah rid the frontier of a dangerious disturber of the peace. We have already noticed the activities of the Hindustani fanatic colony, which fortunately failed to exert any substantial measure of influence over the local tribesmen.

North of Khyber.

In the Khyber region the behaviour of all the Afridi clans was good, and there were no tribal raids. Progress on the Khyber Railway, which will ultimately connect Peshawar with Landi Khana, continues to be steady, and the project should be completed during 1925. It is hoped that this line will do much to open up and civilize the tribal country through which it passes, besides facilitating in a marked degree the overland trade between India and Afghanistan. There has been no trouble with the tribesmen through whose limits the railway is being carried and construction proceeded well in co-operation with Afridi Khassadars.

The Khyber.

The history of the Afridis of the Kohat Pass included, during the period now under review, an incident which caused a sensation throughout the civilized world. The road through the pass remained opened to public traffic, and little serious crime was committed by the tribes until February 1922

Kohat.

when the bell-of-arms in the police lines at Kohat was broken open under cover of a stormy night, and forty-six ·303 rifles carried off. The offence was eventually traced to Ajab, the criminal whose depredations have been recounted upon an earlier page.

Operation against Ajab.

On receipt of definite information that the rifles were still in Ajab's village, the locality was surrounded and searched by the Frontier Constabulary. The operation resulted in the recovery of thirty-three of the missing rifles, together with a large quantity of other property, among which were certain articles of uniform establishing in the clearest manner the complicity of Ajab in the brutal murder of Colonel and Mrs. Foulkes which had taken place at Kohat in 1920. Unfortunately, Ajab and his immediate companions were away hunting and thus escaped capture. Being reduced to desperate straits, ruined, outlawed, and mocked by their fellow tribesmen, they sought sanctuary in the Tirah, and resolved to kidnap a European and to hold their captive as security for full pardon for their many offences. Hence the murder of Mrs. Ellis, and the kidnapping of Miss Ellis, which have already been briefly mentioned in another place. Newspaper readers all over the world are familiar with the dramatic events which followed. The rescue of Miss Ellis by Mrs. Starr, Khan Bahadur Kuli Khan, and Rissaldar Moghul Baz Khan was among the journalistic sensations of the year 1923. It is not, however, so well known that the outrage caused great indignation among the tribesmen of the locality, who readily co-operated in the search for Miss Ellis. After her recovery, it remained for the North West Frontier Province authorities to call to account both the Kohat Pass Afridis, and the Orakzais, among whom Ajab and his gang had first brought their captive. As a result of the pressure brought to bear by Government, an important tribal assembly was held at Shinawari on May 12th. Sir John Maffey, the Chief Commissioner of the North West Frontier Province, accompanied by the Deputy Commissioner of Kohat, and the Political Agents of the Kurram and the Khyber, met the jirga and spoke to the members with the utmost frankness. A formal declaration was drawn up in consequence, by the chief elders and representatives of the Afridi and Orakzai clans, stating that Ajab Khan and his followers were their enemies, as well as the enemies of the British Government. Ajab Khan and his four followers were never from henceforward to enter the country of the Afridis and the Orakzais. If they did so, they would be captured and handed over to Government. If

The Ellis Tragedy

The Afridi-Orakzai jirga.

they were afforded shelter or passage by any section or individual, Government was to be free to take such action as it might deem suitable, whether by aeroplanes or otherwise. The jirga further agreed to abide by any fines or penalties imposed upon the tribes for the offence of giving the murder-gang passage. On dismissal, the members of the jirga set off in a body to destroy the settlement which had last given shelter to Ajab and his followers. Nor did the measures taken by Government to enforce tribal responsibility for the Kohat outrage end here. The general impression that the uncontrolled acts of a gang of desperados had brought both the Afridis and the Orakzais into dishonour and humiliation, enabled Government to enforce upon the Afridis of the Kohat Pass terms of considerable severity. They agreed to pay a fine of half a lakh of rupees; to destroy the fortified village of Ajab Khan and his relatives, to expel all outlaws except those for whom the tribal maliks could give security, and to harbour no outlaws in future; to admit the right of Government to widen the road through the pass, to erect a telephone and telegraph line through it, and to locate a force of Khassadars therein. The significance of these provisions will be realized when it is pointed out that four years ago, when Government desired to erect a telegraph line through the Pass, these same Afridis refused an offer of Rs. 50,000 as compensation for the infringement of their independence which they considered the erection of the line to entail. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that as a result of the measures taken in connection with the Kohat tragedy, the relations between Government and the Afridi and Orakzai tribes have been placed upon a footing more favourable to the maintenance of order, than has been possible at any previous time.

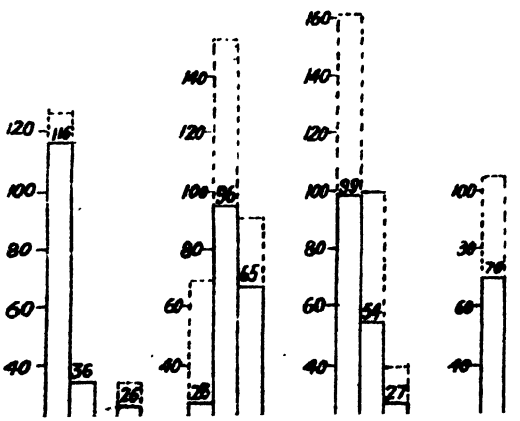
Settlement by the Pass Afridis.

Further South, in the Kurram Valley, the inhabitants enjoyed during the year exceptional peace and prosperity. Various tribal sections who had been under blockade, or who had fines outstanding against them in respect of crimes committed within their territory, settled their obligations in full. Unfortunately, this area was the scene, in November, of the brutal murder of Captain and Mrs. Watts by members of Ajab's gang. Despite the efforts made to intercept the desperadoes, they succeeded in making good their retreat to Afghan territory. Their subsequent fate has already been recounted. With the idea of adjusting mutual claims on the part of British subjects in the Kurram Agency and Afghans on the

The Kurram.

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garrison, and thus brought matters to the co[illegible]ted India in the problem stood before the War. [illegible] of late years been very

From this brief consideration of the tra[illegible] been coupled with the and West constitutes the extreme political [illegible] natural demand that

The North-West Frontier Province.

turn eastward to t[illegible] of their country. This direct British Admi[illegible] a request for the rapid of the North-West [illegible]he regular army; and mic conditions were considerably easier in the[illegible]s for training Indians in previous years. Prices of food grains dropped [illegible] the interest taken of excellent harvests. The Province has shown fu[illegible] not been return to normal conditions, after the unrest which had been [illegible]gh far from the Third Afghan War. The Administration was thus able [illegible] tinue, with marked effect, its systematic attempt to suppress the raid[illegible] nuisance. In the Peshawar, Kohat, and Bannu districts, no fewer than 175 outlaws were captured or killed during the year by the Frontier Constabulary, police, local levies and village pursuit parties. It is noteworthy in this connection that the villagers are now displaying much zeal in co-operating with the constabulary against raiders. Their increasing confidence and determination is certain before long to handicap severely the initiative of marauding gangs. Since the year 1920, the number of raids and the value of loot stolen by the tribesmen have diminished enormously all along the Frontier, as a reference to the diagram on the opposite page will make amply apparent. But the occurrence of the very startling outrages committed by Ajab Khan and his fellow criminals during 1923 has brought the whole subject of raiding into such prominence in the public eye, that there is some danger lest the real and steady improvement in the suppression of the nuisance which has followed from the systematic offensive pursued by the authorities, should be deprived of the importance which is rightfully due to it.

We noticed in last year's report that the hardships endured by the inhabitants of the settled districts of the North-West Frontier Province at the hands of raiders, had excited much feeling throughout the rest of India. The Legislative Assembly directed trenchant criticism against the administration of the Province, whose heavy cost made the failure of the authorities entirely to exterminate the raiding gangs an additional grievance in the eyes of public opinion. The attention devoted to the whole question led to enquiries as to the desirability of revoking Lord Curzon's policy of separating the North-West Frontier Province from the Punjab. Interest moreover was stimulated by the belief, current

Public interest in the North West Frontier.

e more advanced inhabitants of the settled
rontier Province, suffer both in their political
ministration from their association with a
the direction of comparatively uncivilized
e appointed by the Government of India,
rought forward in the Legislative Assembly,
red through the North-West Frontier Pro-
nce to examine various questions which were
eferred to it. The trend of the evidence
mittee showed that the question of maintaining
West Frontier Province in its present condition, or of
gamating it with the Punjab, was viewed from a different
gle by typical representatives of Hindu and Muhammadan opinion
espectively. Broadly speaking, the Hindu elements in the population both of the Punjab and of the North-West Frontier Province favoured amalgamation; while Muslim opinion was generally desirous of retaining the predominantly Muhammadan entity of the North-West Frontier Province in its present condition. The Committee's report was published in March 1924. The British and the Muhammadan members of the Committee concluded that it was impossible to separate the administration of the five settled districts of the North-West Frontier Province from the political control of the adjoining unadministered tracts. In consequence, they recommended that the North-West Frontier Province should be retained as a unit separate from the Punjab. They recommended, however, certain changes in the administrative and legal machinery, which include the cautious application of the Reformed Constitution to the Province; the strengthening of the judiciary; and the application of the elective principle to Local affairs. On the other hand, the two Hindu members of the Committee opposed the main recommendations of the majority. They favoured the handing over of the settled districts, and such trans-frontier areas as are controlled by Deputy Commissioners, to the Punjab Government; while reserving for the Government of India control over the existing trans-frontier agencies. In their view, the separate frontier province has proved a failure which involves a severe financial drain on India, and is accompanied by defects so grave in the administration of the settled districts that re-amalgamation with the Punjab is essential. The Government of India have so far expressed no formal opinion upon the proposals contained in the report.

Its Report.

The interest which has been taken by educated India in the problem of defending her North-Western Frontier has of late years been very noticeable. It has been coupled with the healthy and wholly natural demand that Indians should play their part in the defence of their country. This demand has taken two distinct shapes; first a request for the rapid Indianization of the commissioned ranks of the regular army; and secondly for the extension of the existing facilities for training Indians in the Territorial Force. In connection with the first, the interest taken by the Legislature has continued unabated. Government has not been unresponsive; and the progress achieved in this direction, though far from satisfying Indian national aspirations, has been considerable.

National Defence.

It must be realized that there are two main categories of officers in the Indian Army; those holding the Viceroy's commission, and those holding the King's commission. The majority of the former are men promoted from the ranks. They have a limited status and power of command, both of which are regulated by the Indian Army Act. King's commissions, which carry with them the status and power of command regulated by the British Army Act, have only been granted to Indians since the Great War. Every unit of the Indian Army includes officers holding the Viceroy's commission, while in several units there are Indian Officers holding the King's Commission. It is with the increase in the former class that Indian opinion is principally concerned. King's commissions can be obtained by Indian gentlemen qualifying as cadets in the Royal Military College, Sandhurst; or by promotion among Indian officers of Indian regiments; or by honorary grants to Indian officers whose age and lack of education preclude them from holding the full commission in the ordinary sense. Commissions of the third category are granted *honoris causa*, and are not regarded as augmenting the effective establishment of commissioned officers. The second category, moreover, is also comparatively ineffectual as a source of recruitment, since a Viceroy's commissioned officer cannot as a rule, owing to his age and lack of educational advantages, pursue a normal career as a King's commissioned officer. It is the first of the three avenues which gives the fullest opportunity to the Indian for enjoying a military career on terms of absolute equality with the British officer. Ten vacancies have in the first instance been reserved annually at Sandhurst for Indian cadets; and in order to enable Indian boys who desire to enter the

Problems of "Indianization."

How Indians obtain King's Commissions.

Army to acquire the necessary qualification for admission to the College, there has been established the Prince of Wales' Royal Indian Military College at Dehra Dun. The arrangements so far made will enable a maximum of 70 boys to be in residence together; the normal course of education has been planned to occupy six years. The College has so far displayed great promise; and there is every hope that it will amply achieve the intentions for which it was created. Early in 1924, it was visited by a number of members of the Legislative Assembly, who expressed warm approval of the type of education imparted, and the general conditions under which the cadets were trained. In addition to providing the means by which a satisfactory stream of candidates for Sandhurst may be maintained, the Government of India has recently made provision for the complete Indianization of eight units of the Indian Army. To these units, which include two from cavalry, five from infantry, and one pioneer battalion, Indian officers holding commissions in the Indian Army will be gradually transferred and posted to fill up the appointments for which they are qualified by their rank and their length of service. The importance of this step from a military point of view is very great. It will give Indians a fair opportunity of proving that units officered by Indians will be in every way efficient. But the mere fact that the completion of the experiment will take some twenty-two or twenty-three years, has prevented Indian political opinion, in its present mood, from realizing either the magnitude of the initial step, or the pledge which it constitutes of the earnestness of British intentions in the matter of Indianizing the commissioned ranks of the Indian Army. That the aspiration of educated Indians to assume an increasing share of responsibility for the defence of their country is both natural and praiseworthy, may be readily admitted; and inevitably it is this aspect of the question which looms largest in the judgment of Indian political opinion. On the other hand those who would press for much more rapid advance along lines the efficacy of which is still undemonstrated, expose themselves to the reply that the security of the country as a whole is a matter so vital that it ought not lightly to be jeopardised, even by those who are animated by the most commendable of intentions, for the sake of speedier progress. Turning to the Indian Territorial Force, we may notice that the constitution of the first batch of experimental units in 1921 has been satisfactory. Twenty provincial battalions are now in existence, the enrolled strength being over 12,000.

The Dehra Dun College.

Indianization of Eight Units.

The Territorial Force.

The great majority of the battalions are full; although some units still fail to attract the sanctioned quota of recruits. One of the great problems connected with the development of the force is the provision of adequately trained officers. For the command of battalions and companies, officers of the regular army are provided; and opportunities have been afforded for the further training of Indian territorial force officers by attaching them for limited periods to regular battalions. In addition to the provincial battalions, may be mentioned the University Training Corps, a section of the Indian Territorial Force which has also attained a large measure of popularity. There are now six battalions located at Bombay, Calcutta, Allahabad, Lahore, Madras and Rangoon; and two separate companies have been constituted at Patna and Benares. It is yet too early to judge of the military value of the territorial force, but the progress hitherto achieved has been satisfactory. Its full potentialities cannot of course be estimated till it has been in existence for some time longer. While it is to be hoped that the force will in future years be able to play an important part in the defence of the country, it must be realized that by reason of the comparatively limited period devoted to its training, it can hardly hope to rival the regular army in efficiency. In case of emergency, it would not be ready to take the field until the lapse of a considerable time after its embodiment. The Territorial Force has been constituted as a second line to, and a potential source of reinforcement for, the regular army. Membership of the force carries with it a liability for more than purely local service. It thus differs in scope from membership of the Auxiliary Force, which is so far confined to European British subjects. This body can only be called out for service locally in case of emergency, and is intended primarily for those who can undertake military training only in their spare time, and are unable to perform the more lengthy periodical training, which constitutes the obligation of the territorial force. Political opinion in India has tended to regard with disfavour the distinction between the two bodies; and early in 1924 the Legislative Assembly debated a motion recommending the amalgamation of the two. As a result of the debate, an amended motion was accepted by Government, to the effect that a Committee should be appointed to enquire into and report what steps should be taken to improve and expand the Territorial Force so as to constitute it an efficient second line to the Regular Army; and to remove all racial distinction in the constitution of the non-regular military forces in India, including the Auxiliary Force.

The Auxiliary Force.

India's Defence by Sea.

While as we have seen, India's defence by land presents real and serious problems, which are more and more engaging the attention of the politically-minded classes, there is another aspect of her national safety which has hitherto failed to attract the notice that it deserves. This is her defence by sea. So long as India remained a part of the British Commonwealth, the resources of sister-nations could always rally to her rescue against land attack, if her sea-ways were secure. But if once India's oceans fell under the control of a hostile power, that power could without difficulty impose its will upon her; and this not merely by cutting her communications with the civilized world, and ruining the commerce upon which millions depend; but by the remorseless process of irresistible subjugation. Secure in the mastery of sea communications, a foreign aggressor could seize scores of points upon her coast line; could land troops where he pleased, through his superior mobility; and could build up his resources for a deadly blow without the risk of interruption. In short, while India's desire for a national army rests upon solid foundation, she can hardly hope to attain a position among the Great Powers unless she is also secure from the side of the sea. She has flourished for long under the shadow of British sea-power. At present, there are many persons in India who contend that all the country needs to safeguard her national existence, if she severed her connection with the British Commonwealth, is a national army. But it seems unquestionable that she would also need a national navy, and this of a costliness which she would be for many years unable to support. At present her financial responsibility for defence by sea is very limited. She maintains the transport and survey service known as the Royal Indian Marine, and contributes a sum of £100,000 annually towards the upkeep of the East Indies Squadron of the British Navy. The more farsighted among her politicians have not failed to draw attention to the naval weakness of the country; and demands have been put forward for the establishment of a nautical college; for the admission of Indians to superior ranks of the Royal Indian Marine; and for the encouragement of India's national commerce. Progress must necessarily be gradual, first on the score of financial stringency, and secondly on the ground that India is not as yet in a position to furnish a fleet-unit fully manned by Indian officers and men. It is much to be hoped that the question of naval defence, which is generally regarded as a wholly subsidiary matter, will not be relegated to the background by the educated classes. India's coastline is

as a potential source of danger at least as formidable as her land-frontier.

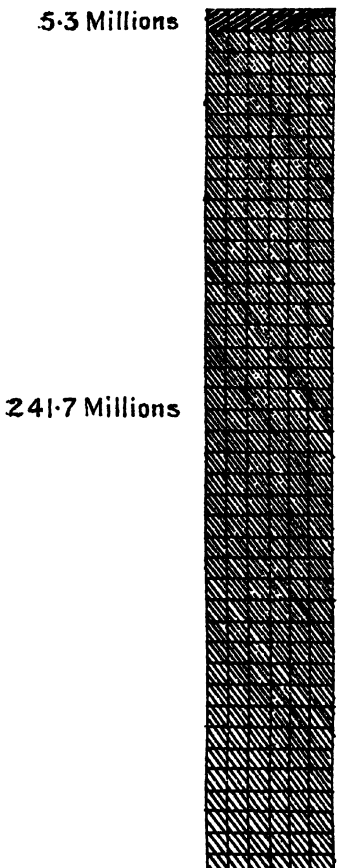
Among the contributory causes to the eagerness with which the Indianization of the Army is pressed by Indian political opinion, must be reckoned considerations of economy. That India spends upon her military organization, including the Royal Indian Marine, a sum of about Rs. 60 crores out of a total net revenue, including that of the Central and Provincial Governments, of Rs. 223 crores, is a fact upon which Indian opinion has for some time expressed itself with increasing frankness. Quite apart from the desire to expend in other directions a proportion of the money now devoted to defence, there is a general belief which, despite the efforts of the authorities has not been dissipated, that a portion of the Indian Army is maintained less specifically for the defence of India than for general Imperial purposes. Further, the strikingly small proportion paid by India towards the cost of her own naval defence is very generally omitted as a factor in the reckoning. Military authorities maintain that in comparison with the defence expenditure of other countries, India is in reality comparatively lightly charged. In Great Britain, for example, defence expenditure in 1923 worked out at something like Rs. 50 per head of population. In the United States, which spent six times as much as India upon defence, the figure works out at some Rs. 35 per head. An even more striking example, they say, is that of Japan ; whose defence expenditure amounted in 1923 to some Rs. 118 crores, out of a total budget of Rs. 225 crores, implying a burden of Rs. 20 per head. A study of the Press shows that Indian critics are prone to discount these comparisons by the plea that the average income per head in India is so small that the burden of her defence, which works out at something less than Rs. 2 per individual, represents a far less tolerable imposition than does the greater expenditure of other countries. The military experts reply that this line of argument, while amply demonstrating the necessity for increasing, by every possible means, the income—which means the productivity—of the individual Indian, has very little relevancy to the question at issue. The defence expenditure of a country, they say, is regulated rather by her natural vulnerability and by her willingness to bear burdens for the sake of her national safety, than by the poverty or wealth of her individual citizens. It is therefore urged that while the geographical factors of India's situation both by sea and by land remain unchanged, it is difficult to conceive that she will be able to reduce with safety her national insurance against invasion. On the

Cost of India's Defence.

part of the military authorities there is full realization of the heavy burden which the present figure of military expenditure imposes upon the finances of the country; and during the period under review, strenuous efforts have been made to effect economy. The reduction of the army in India to a post-war limit has been completed; and His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief considers it incompatible with safety to make any further diminution in the fighting forces. In other directions the pursuit of economy is being rigorously carried on. With very few exceptions, the recommendations of Lord Inchcape's Committee have been put into effect; and the provision for the established charges of the Army has been reduced to a figure below the standard recommended.

DIAGRAM 2.

The Voters of British India.



N. B. Each square represents 1,000,000 of population

CHAPTER II.

Responsibilities and Rights.

In order to elucidate the present constitutional position in India, and to explain the feeling, at present so characteristic of the politically-minded classes, in favour of further advance, it is necessary to preface a short sketch of the reformed constitution, which India is now working. It should be remembered that from the year 1833 to the year 1919, the administrative system of the country was highly centralised. Subject to the superintendence, direction and control of the Secretary of State and Parliament, the Government of India was vested in the hands of the Governor-General-in-Council. In deference to considerations of practical convenience, this centralization had been accompanied by considerable devolution in matters of detail; but the Government of India, as agent for the Secretary of State, were largely concerned in all major matters of administration. The increasing complexity of the administrative machine led to an appreciation of the obvious disadvantages of a system so centralised; and from the beginning of the XX Century onwards, more and more attention was devoted to the possibility of decentralization: and there was a tendency both on the part of Parliament and of the Government of India gradually to abdicate their functions in the sphere of provincial administration. This tendency was both exemplified and enforced by the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. The subjects of administration are now divided definitely into the categories of Central and Provincial. In the latter are included local self-government, medical administration, public health and sanitation, education, public-works and water-supply with certain reservations, land revenue administration, famine relief, agriculture, fisheries and forests, co-operation, excise, the administration of justice subject to legislation by the Indian Legislature, registration, industrial development, police and prisons, sources of provincial revenue and many miscellaneous items. A large measure of devolution from the Central to the Local authorities has thus been provided.

Administrative Devolution since the Reforms.

There remained however the problem of strengthening and increasing the element of popular control, which was the professed object of the

Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. This problem was complicated first by the necessity of providing some reasonable continuity of administration; and secondly by the fact that the popular elements upon whom in future responsibility would fall, were lacking in experience. It was therefore decided to divide the functions of government in the provinces into two halves, one still amenable to the British Parliament, the other amenable to an authority now for the first time called into being, the Indian Electorate. The first half of the provincial executives is constituted by the Governor, working with executive councillors nominated by the Crown; the second is constituted by the Governor, working with Ministers whom he selects from elected members of the local legislature. To correspond with this division in the executive, the subjects of provincial administration have similarly been divided into two parts, named for convenience "reserved" and "transferred." The reserved subjects are administered by the Governor and his Council, who are responsible to the Government of India and ultimately to the British Parliament. The transferred subjects are administered by the Governor and his Ministers, who are intended to be amenable to the Indian electorate. Among the transferred subjects, are included a large number of those functions of the administration upon the development of which India's progress depends. Among them may be mentioned education, industrial development, local self-government, medical administration and public-health, excise, agriculture, fisheries, co-operation, and many other items.

Association of Popular Elements with Government.

The plan of dividing the provincial executives into two halves was adopted because in the circumstances of India at the time of the Reforms, those in control found it difficult to devise any alternative method of combining stability with progress. From the standpoint of constitutional theory, the scheme was much criticised; first on the ground of the inherent difficulty of rending asunder the seamless fabric of administration; secondly, since all the provincial legislatures were to include a substantial majority of elected non-officials, it seemed probable that a virtually irremovable executive might be confronted by an irresponsible legislature. It is true that to obviate the risk of deadlock, the Governors were given a reserve of authority which enabled them to carry on the essential work of the administration irrespective of the policy of the legislature. In the sphere of the transferred subjects, this

The Dyarchical System.

reserve of authority was naturally more restricted than in the sphere of the reserved subjects, upon the maintenance of which the whole structure of orderly government really depended. But the existence of this discretionary power, however inevitable it may have been, naturally tended to weaken the responsibility of the legislatures. During the first three years of the new constitution, the elected members of the various local councils employed their power in a manner which was on the whole wise and temperate ; while the executive governments have attempted to carry on the administration both of reserved and of transferred subjects, in a manner as far as possible in harmony with the wishes of the legislatures. The result has been that many provincial administrations have worked with greater smoothness than was anticipated by critics.

The Working of the Provincial Constitutions.

Since the Government of India have recently commenced a careful enquiry into the working of the reformed constitution, with a view to a removal of the defects which its operation has revealed, it would be premature to enter into a detailed criticism, for which, indeed, the materials are not available to the present writer. None the less, a study of press opinion, combined with an appeal to the experience of officials and non-officials intimately connected with the working of the reforms, serves to bring to light certain broad conclusions which are so generally recognised that they are unlikely seriously to be modified by the results of the official investigation. It is apparent in the first place that the new provincial governments have certain solid achievements to their credit. A large body of very useful legislation, covering a wide range, stands upon the statute book, in testimony to the influence exerted by non-official opinion in the various legislatures. It is also plain that in many provinces a system of "government by committee" has been initiated. Standing committees of the legislatures have been associated with the work of administration, and their members have acquired a valuable insight into the practical problems of government. Furthermore, the appointment of *ad hoc* committees has been the favourite method of investigating provincial problems of an important type with a view to discovering possible solutions. The educative effect of this process upon the elected members of the legislature has been very marked ; and before the end of the first reformed councils, was reflected in the general tone of the proceedings. Further, the working of the provincial governments under the new conditions has led to the growth of provincial solidarity. That

Achievements.

the resulting centrifugal tendency is by no means an unmixed gain, may readily be admitted ; but on the whole the advantage of lessening the distance which in India divides the individual citizen from the administrative machine, may be held for the present at least to outweigh the disadvantage of growing provincial separatism. Finally, we may note that the achievements of the local legislatures, and the reality of their influence over the general policy of the executive have amply demonstrated the efficacy of what may be called constitutional methods of political progress, as against the sterility which has resulted from those systems which advocated the opposite course.

Deficiencies.

But on the other hand no observer can fail to notice that the dyarchical constitution of the provincial executives has not entirely realised the intentions of those who formulated the scheme. The fundamental assumption underlying the hope that dyarchy would lead to the growth of responsibility was the postulation of an intimate connection between the ministers and the legislature. It was indeed believed that this relation would gradually approximate to something roughly parallel to the Cabinet system. For while it was not contemplated that the ministers should resign every time their proposals were defeated in the legislative councils, it was thought that they would stand out broadly as party leaders, commanding for the support of their policy compact and influential sections of the elected members. Had such a contingency been realized, the legislative councils would rapidly have acquired a decisive influence over policy concerning the transferred subjects ; and only the establishment of a convention that a minister, when defeated, should give place to the head of the opposition party, would have been necessary for the consummation of a system of responsible government on the transferred side. Unfortunately, this development has not taken place. The opinion of the Indian press has been almost unanimous in certain of its criticisms upon this point. It is urged in the first place, that there has been a noticeable tendency in the majority of provinces for the ministers to work in far closer relationship with their executive colleagues than with the councils, to which they are in theory responsible. In consequence, it is said, the fact that the popular half of the provincial government ought to be something quite different from the official half, both in its relations to the legislature and in the discharge of its administrative functions, has not been generally appreciated by the public. Moreover, Indian political opinion of the section which took keen interest

nsibility has not grown.

in the working of the reforms, has from the first been extremely anxious to assimilate the position and the functions of the ministers to those of the executive councillors ; without perceiving that the true line of advance lay in an exact reversal of this process. But perhaps the most fundamental explanation put forward of the apparent slowness of the dyarchical system to foster the growth of responsibility between the ministers and the legislatures, is the fact that no clear-cut parties developed during the life of the first councils. The elected members were all, broadly speaking, representative of one political standpoint, even though certain sectional and communal differences existed. They had inherited from the pre-reform councils a traditional opposition to government ; and this opposition they tended to bring to bear upon the transferred as well upon the reserved side of the executive. Except in Madras, where there has throughout been a strong identity of interests and outlook between the ministers, who are non-Brahmins, and the dominant non-Brahmin party of the legislature, and in the Punjab, where the Muhammadan members of the legislature have generally looked to their coreligionist minister for guidance, the ministerial half of the provincial executives have had as a rule no definite party of support in the legislature. One consequence of this has been a further confusion in the popular mind between the ministry and the executive councillors ; since the ministers, not knowing how many votes they can command in the councils, have been compelled to look upon the official nominated members as the nucleus of their voting strength. At the same time, the ministers have generally been obliged to seek support for their projects by personal canvassing among the elected members, who have thus great influence in the shaping of proposals, but no credit for success, and no blame for failure. Nor has the rudimentary character of the party system in the reformed legislatures exercised an unfortunate influence only upon the growth of ministerial responsibility ; it has resulted, with perhaps two exceptions, in the executive governments of the various provinces being obliged to carry on the business of administration without a working majority of any sort in the legislature. Such a state of affairs, if long persisted in, must inevitably result in weak administration. Further, the absence of clear-cut parties, with their internal discipline, has resulted in many provincial legislatures functioning rather as a collection of individual critics, who do not separate in their own mind questions of policy and questions of administration, but tend to trespass more

No Clear-cut Parties.

Consequences.

and more upon the functions of the executive. The difficulty of the position in which the ministers of many provinces have found themselves, has been enhanced by the period of financial stringency from which India is but now emerging. Generally speaking, funds have not been available for those spectacular developments in the sphere of education, sanitation, or public health, which alone could have convinced the general public that ministers exercise a vital influence upon the conduct of the administration. A study of the provincial budgets does not, in point of fact, lend full support to the popular theory that the transferred subjects have been starved. The allocation of funds between the reserved and the transferred side of the Government, seems to average about two-thirds and one-third respectively of the provincial income ; and it must be remembered that to the reserved side is debited the cost of the major portion of the administrative structure. But when full allowance is made for this consideration, the fact remains that in the majority of provinces the ministers have not been able to dispose of funds to the extent which they have desired. Further, despite the general harmony which seems to have characterised the relation between the ministers and the permanent officials of the departments under their control, the position has not been free from difficulty ; and there is reason to believe that some ministers have considered themselves unduly fettered.

Difficulties of the Ministers.

From all that has been said, it will be apparent that the working of the reformed constitution in the provinces has been no easy matter. The general success with which it has functioned has been due first to the fact that the elected majority in the provincial legislatures was, during the life of the first councils, composed of men for the most part genuinely anxious to work the constitution and to avoid deadlocks ; and secondly to the fact that the provincial governments as a whole proceeded to the furthest possible limits in their endeavours to shape their policy in accordance with the wishes of the elected members. The result of the decision of one wing of the Congress party to seek entry into the reformed councils will be considered more fully in another place. It is here sufficient to notice that the presence, in the second legislatures elected under the reformed constitution, of an element more extreme in its views, has undoubtedly served to stimulate the growth of political parties in the parliamentary sense of the term. In the one legislature where the Swarajist members possess an indefeasible majority over all other parties, they have already terminated

Later Developments.

the dyarchical system. Elsewhere, they have devoted their energies as a rule to the construction of compact opposition blocs ; and by their frankly expressed desire to render the working of the present constitution impossible, they have driven those members who do not see eye to eye with them politically, to adopt some corresponding form of group organization in order to avoid submergence. The old tradition that elected members are bound to oppose government on every occasion, while still possessing vitality, seems on the wane ; and it is already apparent that the councils which have recently been elected are far less individualistic, and far more prone to operate in parties and blocs than their predecessors. Even so, however, the difficulties with which the executive are faced persist ; and it seems probable that one of the most important questions with which the official enquiry will be obliged to concern itself, is the problem of so modifying the relations between the provincial executives and the provincial legislatures, that working harmony prevails between them.

Position in the Central Government.

The position in the Central Government during the life of the first reformed councils differed considerably from that which obtained in the provinces. There is no dyarchical system in the Government of India ; yet the popular House contains an overwhelming non-official majority. The natural tendency has been for many activities of the Government of India to be brought under the influence of the Legislature. And while this influence has in practice been operative along many lines, it is exercised by a body which has no constitutional responsibility for carrying on the business of government. The framers of the constitution did, it is true, attempt to obviate deadlocks by conferring on the Governor-General power in grave emergency to override the Legislature. But the exercise of this power, however inevitable during the present transitional consitution, has proved unfortunate in two ways. First, it is distasteful to the Legislature and tends to exascerbate relations with the irremovable executive ; secondly, it weakens whatever sense of responsibility the considerable powers possessed by the Legislature might be expected to foster. For since the ultimate decision on vital questions rests with the Governor-General, an authority who from the point of view of the Legislature is not only irremovable, but also immune from discussion, the elected members can, if they so desire, play the parliamentary game with most of its privileges and none of its penalties. If the Government of India accept the opinion

The Executive and the Legislature.

of the elected majority, the responsibility either for good or for evil still remains with the executive. If good result, the elected members are naturally able to claim credit with the country ; if the consequences are evil, there is no inducement for them to assume an onus, which really rests upon the shoulders of the executive. On the other hand, if the opinion of the elected members is not accepted by Government, no matter with what weight of argument the officials are fortified in their refusal, the only consequence is that the legislature is affronted, and Indian political opinion is presented with a new grievance. It says much for the reasonable temper generally displayed by the elected majority in the first reformed assembly that the relations between the executive and the legislature remained on the whole very cordial. Situations calling for the intervention of the Governor-General's reserve powers arose infrequently. But in each instance their use aroused both disappointment and resentment. The general harmony between the executive and the legislature was of course greatly facilitated during the life of the first assembly by the readiness of Government to conform, so far as possible, to the wishes of the elected members. Such steps as the repeal of many " repressive " laws ; the practical abolition of racial discrimination in criminal trials ; the systematic commencement of the Indianisation of the Indian Army ; the enunciation of the new policies both in regard to railway administration and tariff control ; all these, and many other instances which might be quoted, serve to show the amenability of the executive to popular pressure. Indeed, it might fairly be said that except when in the opinion of Government some fundamental of peace, order or good administration, was in question, the opinion of the legislature has ordinarily prevailed ; and this not merely in questions of policy, but also in what may be called details of administration. This fact is the more important on account of the inevitable tendency of the legislature to increase the scope and influence of its deliberations by encroaching upon the sphere technically reserved from its control. For example during the allocation of funds at the time of the budget, it has been established that the Assembly can discuss both military and political expenditure. The practical experience of administrative questions which the Assembly acquires through the enlargement of its sphere of action by conventions such as this, may reasonably be deemed a substantial gain. But the experience of the first Indian legislature showed that the relations between the Assembly in particular and the executive were so delicate that the consti-

The Legislature's Great Influence.

tution could only be made to work by the determination of both sides that it should do so. It is interesting to notice that in the Assembly, unlike the provincial councils, something like a party system grew up fairly early. The reality of the divisions between the various groups was however somewhat weakened first by the general tradition of opposition to the executive, and secondly by the fact that the elected members were all drawn from that section of political opinion which desired the success of the reforms.

Parties.

Nevertheless, during the first two years of the life of the assembly there were moderately compact groups under recognised leaders. Party discipline was not, it is true, always effective ; but at least it was possible to negotiate in the Lobby, and across the Floor of the House with definite groups. In the third year of the first assembly, the party system began to break up ; in some measure, it would seem, owing to the realization that party divisions were not dictated by any broad questions of principle ; and in some measure owing to the discontent manifested by the great majority of elected members at certain executive acts, particularly the appointment of the Public Services Commission and the restoration of the enhanced duty on salt. When the new Assembly met, it became plain that the situation was radically altered by the appearance of a compact and well-disciplined Swarajist bloc. During the first session, as we shall have occasion to notice below, the party discipline exercised by the Swarajists both over members of their own group, and over non-Swarajist members of the Nationalist coalition, served to illustrate in exaggerated degree the difficulties of a system under which the legislature, while possessed of extraordinary influence and power for obstruction, has no ultimate responsibility either for the consequences of its own action, or for the administration of policy by the executive.

The realization by India of responsible government, foreshadowed by the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, postulates the development of administrative capacity and civic consciousness among a class considerably more extensive than that which furnishes the elected members of the provincial and local legislatures. Only upon foundations which are adequate in extent as well as solid in structure, can the future fabric of a self-governing India be erected. This consideration lends particular importance to the institutions of local self-government, which in every democratic country provide at once for the inception and for the training of public-spirited activities in the service of the State. Unfortunately, in few branches

Local Self-Government.

of national life is the contrast between India and the West so marked as in this sphere. Among the Anglo-Saxon peoples, the institutions of local self-government are planted deep in the individual consciousness. The superstructure of freedom and of democracy which characterises such countries as England and the United States is a direct and logical development of the principles inherent in the institutions of local self-government. In India the situation is different. For many centuries indigenous institutions containing the elements of a structure of local self-government have, it is true, existed in some parts of India. And although they seem to have been concerned with somewhat trivial affairs, they may well have played a considerable part in the life of the average citizen during the long history of the country. But from the modern standpoint they appear to have suffered from certain serious defects. In the first place, they were not based upon elective institutions but upon reverence for age, in combination with hereditary privilege, or caste exclusiveness. In the second place, they were not correlated with the institutions of superior administration ; had few definite functions entrusted to them ; and did not stand as representative of the locality in the eyes of the government. Their activities in fact, were supplementary to those of the administration, and were accordingly rather ignored than encouraged by the higher powers. During the anarchy of the XVIII Century these indigenous institutions fell largely into decay ; and early British administrators, confronted with the task of erecting order out of chaos, found few traces of this primitive local machinery which they were willing or able to utilise among the foundations of modern India. It is therefore true to say that the structure of local self-government in its present form is mainly a creation of British rule. It has been imposed upon the people from above ; partly as a measure of decentralization ; partly as an educational process, and is thus to some extent alien from the spirit of the people. And while these institutions have struck their roots more deeply year by year, they have until lately displayed no very considerable progress. This fact is attributed in many quarters to the strict official control under which they were for long maintained. We may notice that so far back as 1882, a resolution of Lord Ripon's Government laid down in the clearest terms the principle that the object of local institutions was to train the people in the management of their own local affairs ; and that political education of this sort must generally take precedence over considerations of departmental efficiency. But

Indigenous Institutions.

Imported Ideas.

this pronouncement became inoperative on account of the natural inclination to administer local institutions through official agency, which was both able and willing to relieve the non-official members of municipalities and district boards of the small responsibilities actually allotted to them. Hence there came into existence a vicious circle. The municipalities and district boards remained apathetic because the powers entrusted to them were as a rule insignificant. On the other hand these powers continued insignificant because of the lack of public spirit among the members. The result was that for many years the institutions of local self-government in India failed to enlist the unpaid services of that class of public-spirited men, conscious of an ability to wield power, upon which the system has been primarily built both in England and in America.

A brief survey of the condition of municipalities and district boards in India in 1921-1922—the latest date for which complete statistics are available—will reveal the general progress which can be claimed for the institutions of local self-government.

Municipalities in British India.

Taking first municipalities, it may be noticed that there are some 751 in British India, with something over 18,000,000 people resident within their limits. Of these municipalities, 683 have a population of less than 50,000 persons, and the remainder a population of 50,000 and over. As compared with the population of the particular provinces, the proportion resident within municipal limits is largest in Bombay, where it amounts to 20%, and smallest in Assam where the figure is only 2%. In other major provinces it varies from 4% to 9% of the total population. When we turn to the composition of these bodies, we find that considerably more than half the total members are elected ; and that there is a steady tendency to increase this proportion. In all the municipalities taken together, the elected members outnumber the officials by nearly six to one. Ex-officio members number only 8%, and nominated members, who as a rule represent special interests, number 27%. The work discharged by municipal institutions falls under the head of public safety, health, convenience and instruction. The municipal income of Rs. 12·96 crores (£8,600,000) is derived principally from taxation ; just over one-third coming from municipal property, from contributions out of provincial revenues, and from miscellaneous sources.

Their Functions.

Generally speaking, the income of the average municipality is small ; the four great cities of Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and Rangoon, together accounting for nearly 40% of the total. The heaviest items of expenditure come under the heads of conservancy

and public works, which amount to 16% and 14% of the budget respectively. Water supply comes to 13%, and drainage to 7%. Education has hitherto amounted to about 8% ; but this proportion seems generally on the increase, and in some localities it is already considerably exceeded. For example, in the Bombay Presidency, excluding Bombay City, the expenditure on education amounts to more than 21% of the total funds ; while in the Central Provinces and Berar it is over 15%.

The District Boards.

In view of the fact that only 10% of the population of British India lives in towns, municipal administration cannot for some time to come affect in any large degree the majority of the people. Particular importance therefore attaches in India to the working and constitution of the district boards, which perform in rural areas the functions which are discharged in urban areas by the municipalities. In almost every district in British India, save in the Province of Assam, there is a board, subordinate to which are two or more sub-district boards ; while in Bengal, Madras, Bihar and Orissa there are also union committees. Throughout India at large the total number of district boards amounts to some 219, with 543 sub-district boards and more than 800 union committees. The members of the boards and sub-district boards numbered a little over 13,000 in 1921-1922 of whom 59% were elected. As in the case of the municipalities, the tendency has been to increase the elected members at the expense of the nominated and official members. Indians constitute 96% of the whole strength ; and only 13% of the total membership consists of officials. The income of the boards in 1921 amounted to Rs. 10·93 crores (£7,280,000), the average income of each district board being Rs. 5 lakhs (£34,000). The most important item of revenue is provincial rates, representing a proportion of total income varying from 18% in the North-West Frontier Province to 61% in Bihar and Orissa. The principal objects of expenditure are education—which has come remarkably to the front within the last three years—and civil works, such as roads and bridges. Medical relief is also sharing with education, though in less degree, the lion's portion of the available revenue.

Local Self-Government under the Reforms.

The institutions of local self-government in India have unquestionably derived a more vigorous vitality from the development of constitutional reforms. After the momentous announcement of the 20th August 1917 had laid down the ultimate aim of British rule in India, the Executive Government made a sustained effort to arouse local institutions

from the stagnant conditions then characterising them. In 1918 the Government of India issued an important resolution laying down in general terms the lines of progress. While reiterating the principle enunciated long ago by Lord Ripon's Government, the new resolution went on to affirm that the general policy must henceforward be one of gradually removing all unnecessary official control, and differentiating between the spheres of action appropriate for governmental and for local institutions. These principles had hardly come into operation when the introduction of the Reforms transferred the control of local self-government to ministers, responsive to the wishes of the legislatures, and elected by popular suffrage. Almost every local government has displayed itself during the last three years as zealous to foster in every way the progress of local institutions. In the Punjab, the local government has taken up three measures of considerable importance, providing for the creation of improvement trusts, for the more effective administration of smaller towns, and for the establishment of village councils. Further, every district board and every municipality in the province has been reconstituted in a more democratic form. The elective system is being introduced in all bodies where it did not previously exist ; and there has been a general lowering of the district boards franchise. Elective seats are being redistributed between communities on the basis of a mean ratio between their relative population and their relative voting strength. In the United Provinces, a District Boards Bill was passed at the end of 1922, which completely deofficialised the boards ; reduced the franchise ; and conferred certain powers of taxation. Other measures were also put forward to modify the municipal franchise in the same direction. In Bihar and Orissa the legislative council has reviewed the whole field of local self-government, and three important acts have been passed. The Municipal Act has for its object the revision of municipal law in accordance with the recent demand that municipalities should become more widely representative and contain an increased proportion of elected members. Another Act introduced direct election in the district boards, and removed them from the supervision and control of local officials. The Village Administration Act provides for the creation of unions consisting of a number of villages ; and the constitution therein on an elective basis of union boards which may be given certain important duties, including the control of village police. In their ad-

Legislative Activity.

The Punjab.

United Provinces.

Bihar and Orissa.

ministrative sphere, the boards can be entrusted with sanitation, medical relief, primary education, and the maintenance of village roads. In the Central Provinces a very important measure regulating municipalities has passed into law. Its chief features are the extension of the municipal franchise, the reduction of official and nominated members,

Central Provinces.

the extension of the powers of municipal committees, and the relaxation of official control. Both in the Municipalities Act, and in the rules framed under the Local Self-Government Act—which became law prior to the meeting of the new legislative councils—the general policy of freeing local bodies from official control has been pursued. In Assam, an important municipal measure has been passed by the local legislature, to remove certain de-

Assam.

fects which previously existed, and to bring the law in Assam in line with the more modern municipal legislation in force elsewhere in India. In Bengal two measures of first rate importance have recently taken shape. The Bengal Village Self-Government Act is intended for the promotion of local self-government by the constitution of small rural units. The Act was passed before the inauguration of the Reforms ; and despite the enthusiastic

Bengal.

support of the local Ministers, it has not been found possible to proceed with its extension as rapidly as was hoped, owing to the vigorous attacks made upon it by the non-co-operation party. An Act for reconstituting the Calcutta municipality was passed in 1923, by which the constitution of the corporation has been democratised, and women's suffrage has been introduced. The initiative in this matter was taken by the Minister for Local Self-Government, Sir Surendranath Banerjea. The Bengal Government have also realised the shortcomings of their municipal law, and have introduced a bill to remove them. This bill provides among other things for the liberalisation of the constitution of the municipalities ; the relaxation of internal official control ; the constitution of education committees, and the compulsory acquisition of lands for certain purposes. Measures are also being taken for the general amendment and consolidation of the Bengal Local Self-Government Act. In Bombay a bill to consolidate and amend various acts relating to local boards

Bombay.

has been passed by the legislative council. This measure extended the franchise, removed sex disqualifications, and gave increased powers to local boards ; constituting in short a very liberal and progressive piece of legislation. In Madras, if there has been less activity than elsewhere on the part of the

reformed provincial administration in the direction of legislative measures concerning local self-government, it is due to the fact that just before the Reforms there had been a complete revision of the Local Boards' Act, and the District Municipalities Act, accompanied by legislation relating to village panchayats, elementary education and town planning, as well as by a large increase in the number of local bodies and their removal from official control. In Burma a Rural Self-Government Act was passed to provide for the introduction of village committees in the Province ;

Burma.

the Burma Village Act of 1907 has been amended. Opportunity was also taken to cancel the provision of the existing law regarding the requisitioning of labour for the maintenance of communications, embankments and other public works.

This fresh infusion of life into the machinery of local self-government, accompanied by the gradual awakening of civic consciousness, has found expression in a certain readiness to undertake experiments.

Revival of the Panchayat.

Prior to the Reforms, the charge was not infrequently levelled against Government that insufficient use was made of the village panchayat or committee of elders ; for in India has been preserved better than anywhere else in the world the ancient unit of the village community. For some time there has been a fear lest this historic body might wither away. In several provinces, attempts were made before the introduction of the Reforms to invest the panchayat with certain powers. Of late, these attempts have been reinforced. In the Punjab, for example, a Village Panchayat Act was passed in 1921, which places this ancient institution upon a modern legal basis, and provides panchayats with powers

In the Punjab.

which will enable them to settle local disputes, and to take measures for the sanitation of villages. A similar measure is in force in the United Provinces, which provides for the establishment, at the discretion of the district officer, of a panchayat for any village or group of villages with power to deal with petty civil suits, with petty criminal offences, and with ordinary cases under the Cattle Trespass Act and Village Sanitation Act. The first panchayats under the new act were established in July 1921, and by the end of March 1922 they had increased in numbers to 5,650. Of the reports received about their working, the majority are encouraging.

In the United Provinces.

Complaints have been few ; and the work both in outturn and quality is pronounced to be deserving of credit. District officers believe that the movement is promising. A considerable degree of popular

interest has been aroused, which should make for the success of the experiment. It is however reported that a percentage of these bodies have as yet done very little ; but the local authorities have been careful to weed out panchayats which seem unlikely to be useful, and to confine the experiment as far as possible to the localities which seem most promising. In Bihar, also, legal provision exists for the constitution of panchayats exercising judicial power both in civil and in criminal cases, but it appears that these bodies have not actually been established, and hence there is no means of judging of the success of the system.

In Bihar.

There is however no reason to doubt that village self-government in India has a great future before it. Village boards and union committees are in general steadily increasing in numbers ; although the set-back caused by the non-co-operation campaign in certain localities has not yet been made good. Progress must therefore necessarily be for the present somewhat slow ; since villagers are particularly prone to suspicion of new institutions, and tend to fall victims to interested misrepresentation by the enemies of government. The aspect which presents itself to them with particular force is inevitably that of taxation ; and localities where village and union boards do not exist sometimes fear that the establishment of these institutions may be accompanied by enhanced financial burdens. Somewhat naturally, village boards share with all other local bodies in India a marked reluctance to tax themselves even for the accomplishment of purely local objects. The majority of members are quite alive to the advantages of improved administration, but are unwilling to face the corresponding financial obligations. It is generally believed that the provincial and central governments possess an inexhaustible purse, out of which they are only prevented by malignancy from drawing supplies to relieve all the financial embarrassments under which the institutions of local self-government at present labour. The sentiment that the Treasury must pay more and the people less towards the cost of local improvement, is sure of general applause in India as elsewhere ; for it is still but imperfectly realized that the Treasury can only pay out from what the public pays in.

Future of village Self-Government.

In India the pace of municipal progress is undoubtedly set by the great centres. Calcutta, Bombay, Rangoon and other important industrial cities have for some years been possessed of energetic and farsighted improvement trusts.

The Great Cities.

Indeed, the magnitude of the operations carried on by the Development Directorates in the two former cities may be said to compare not unfavourably with civic progress in other parts of the Empire. The Calcutta Improvement Trust has recently floated in London two sterling loans of £350,000 and £700,000 respectively. Important housing schemes are being pushed through; open spaces are being cleared in congested areas; new street alignments are being projected; and a vigorous attack upon slum conditions is being made. In Bombay, the operations of the Development Directorate are planned upon a very large scale. Government has sanctioned a scheme for the reclamation of Back Bay, which will cost just over Rs. 7 crores (nearly £5 millions). Large industrial housing projects are being rapidly pushed on to relieve congestion; separate areas for the accommodation of offensive trades are being laid out; and there are schemes for suburban housing in various stages of development involving an area of more than 15,000 acres. In order to safeguard public health while projects of this magnitude are in process of completion, a special committee has been appointed to advise as to the sanitary precautions to be taken in connection with each stage of the work. In other large cities, the example set by the great centres is being followed. In the United Provinces, there are energetic improvement trusts in Allahabad, Lucknow and Cawnpore. The well-directed activity and continued response to public interests of the large municipalities throughout India is symptomatic of the prospects which the future may hold for municipal administration in towns which at the moment are less fortunately situated.

Improvement Trusts.

Before proceeding briefly to describe the functioning of municipalities and district boards in the individual provinces of India, we may note certain general tendencies which have revealed themselves in the course of the period covered by this Statement. We have already found occasion to notice the activity displayed by almost every local legislature in connection with the institutions of self-government. This activity may be taken as illustrative of an increasing interest in these institutions, which is by no means confined to the class from whom the elected members of the provincial legislatures are drawn. Indeed, among the most striking consequences of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms may be reckoned the gradual growth of civic consciousness as manifested in the enhanced vitality of local institutions. It is particularly encouraging to find that the greater interest now evoked by the operation of muni-

Some General Tendencies in Local Self-Government.

Increased Public Interest.

cipalities and district boards extends beyond that section of political opinion keenly interested in the success of the reformed constitution. In this connection it should be noticed that Mr. Gandhi's programme of non-cooperation was never applied to the institutions of local self-government. There was therefore nothing to prevent his adherents from taking their due share in the administration of local affairs. During the year 1922-23, as was mentioned in a previous Report, a number of non-co-operators entered municipal committees in certain parts of India. This movement has continued throughout the course of the period now under review. In the early days, there was a natural tendency on the part of certain of Mr. Gandhi's followers, when they found themselves in a majority on municipal committees, to adopt an attitude of open defiance to Government, which was manifested in such steps as the refusal of grants to Government schools. In Bombay, for example, the Provincial Government found itself obliged to suspend two municipalities, and to remove the chairman of a third. But it is pleasant to be able to record that this aggressive attitude on the part of local bodies in which non-cooperators constituted a powerful element, was from the first the exception and not the rule. Such cases as those just described naturally attracted a large measure of public attention; but broadly speaking, the non-cooperation movement has done very little to damage the institutions of local self-government. Indeed, there are distinct signs of a directly opposite tendency. From many provinces it is reported that non-cooperating Members of municipalities have endeavoured to improve the bodies of which they now form part: they have been anxious to show that they can do better than their predecessors; and in at least one province they have not hesitated to invite the cordial cooperation of Government officials in the task of increasing the efficiency of municipal administration. There has, it is true, been in certain quarters an inclination to introduce political questions into local affairs; and municipal addresses have not infrequently been presented to prominent leaders of the non-cooperation movement. But on the whole, the available information seems to show that the introduction of the non-cooperating element has been accompanied by a distinct awakening on the part of certain municipalities to their obligations towards the public at large. Municipal elections have begun to excite the keenest interest; the proportion of voters who record their suffrages is on the increase; and, perhaps most significant of all, a commencement is being made in the formation of ratepayers, associa-

Non-Cooperators and Municipalities.

tions. It may be noted in passing that in the elections held during the period under review, the non-cooperation party has been as a rule more successful in the larger towns than in the smaller; while its very creditable success in the municipalities is by no means duplicated in the district boards. These latter bodies indeed, constitute a natural field of activity for the landowners and men of property. Local influence has as a rule been predominant; but the mere fact of the candidature of the non-cooperation element has lent to district board elections in certain provinces an atmosphere of liveliness, which has gone some way to dispel the apathy that until recently was characteristic of rural politics.

In District Boards.

There is another tendency, and that of a less pleasing character, which may generally be remarked in connection with the history of the institutions of local self-government during 1923-24. This is the prevalence of communal feeling. Particularly throughout certain parts of Northern India, the relations between the Hindu and Mussulman members of municipal and district committees have been marked by serious tension. In certain towns indeed, Hindu-Muhammadan feeling has completely clogged the whole of the machinery, the community to which the chairman does not happen to belong bending all their energies to the task of obstruction. And in other places, where the situation is not so serious, much time is wasted in mutual recrimination. It is of course beneficial to the efficient transaction of local affairs when the municipalities and district boards are composed of organised parties with definite programmes of local policy; but when these parties are merely communal in their outlook, and are actuated almost solely by sectarian interests, the consequences are uniformly disastrous. It is sincerely to be hoped that with the passing of the present wave of exacerbation which marks Hindu-Muslim relations, the members of the municipalities and of the district boards will find it possible to work together in pursuit of the lasting good of the area under their administration.

Communal Feeling.

Last among the general tendencies which characterise the year 1923-24 may be noticed the financial stringency against which the majority of municipalities and district boards in India are still struggling. It should be remembered that the new regime under which local self-government has been almost entirely free from official control, is necessarily more expensive than the older system. So long as the district officer was virtually responsible for municipal administration, his paid staff performed a considerable

Financial Stringency.

proportion of the necessary executive functions. But now that the municipalities and district boards have become almost autonomous, they have naturally found it essential to engage their own corps of executive officials. The financial effects of the change are more serious in view of the higher prices which have characterized the post-war years in India. Further, the newly constituted local bodies have everywhere devoted their attention to elaborate schemes of education and medical relief, which entail an expenditure far greater than anything which the past can show. They have rightly looked to the local governments for a measure of assistance ; but the unsatisfactory condition of Indian finances has as a rule prevented this assistance from being forthcoming in the requisite degree. In many provinces therefore municipalities and district boards have fallen into debt. The obvious remedy would seem to be enhanced taxation, which is almost everywhere legally within their competence under the new conditions. But local governments report that there is a reluctance on the part of the members to face the unpopularity which fresh taxation entails. In some provinces a few municipalities are setting a courageous example, which at the moment of writing is not being generally followed. However, the universal determination to improve local amenities, particularly in the direction of education, will shortly leave both municipalities and district boards no alternative save to increase their revenue. The first step would seem to be an enhancement in the stringency of collecting existing dues. Almost everywhere, municipalities are said to be extremely reluctant to undertake coercive measures against defaulters ; and in some places municipal commissioners are themselves reckoned among the offenders. It is somewhat remarkable in this connection that in the recent revision of the Calcutta Municipal Act, an amendment was actually carried in the Bengal Legislative Council to remove the provision whereby failure to pay the water rate can be penalised by stopping the water supply. We must hope that with increasing experience, the local bodies throughout India will realise the truth of the old Persian saying that clemency to the offender is tyranny to the honest man. It would seem moreover that in the actual distribution of available funds the new local bodies are occasionally displaying more enthusiasm than reflection. There is still a tendency to indulge in schemes for the promotion of some particularly favoured activity, such as education, at the expense of equally essential services such as health and communications. This tendency is perfectly intelligible ; and if the financial situation were not so unfavourable, its effects would not be serious. But when the total funds at the disposal

of local bodies are so small; and when the lion's share is consumed by one or two activities, no matter how commendable, there is a distinct risk lest other services should be utterly neglected. But in this direction as elsewhere, it may be remarked that the existing defects in the administration of municipal and local boards are such as will cure themselves when the first flush of inexperienced enthusiasm has passed away.

A consideration of the present condition and future prospects of local self-government in India may well be concluded by a brief review of the various provincial activities in this sphere, during the period with which we are now concerned.

North-West Frontier Province.

In the North-West Frontier Province such institutions as municipalities and district boards are somewhat of a foreign growth. For some time certain of the municipalities have been lax in the discharge of their responsibilities, and have shown slight interest in the affairs under their control. But the appointment of non-official vice-presidents by election from among the members has proved a successful change; and the majority of the municipalities seem to be doing good work; although the Hindu-Muslim feeling constitutes a grave obstacle to efficiency. In the larger municipalities, of which Peshawar is by far the most notable, increasing attention is being directed to education, medical relief and water supply; while a beginning is being made in child welfare work. In the district boards the average attendance of official members has fallen almost everywhere; while there has been a sustained improvement in certain localities in the attendance of non-official members. As in the case of municipalities, district boards now elect non-official vice-presidents. Special measures have been taken to increase the financial resources of the boards, whether by the enhancement of the local rate, or by the imposition of a profession tax. Considerable activity is being displayed in the encouragement of education, the expenditure upon which figures at between three and four times that on public works.

The Punjab.

In the Punjab, as has been noticed in a previous section, the new principles underlying the Reforms are being rapidly applied to local bodies. Formulae have been adopted regulating the total number of members in the municipal committees, and the distribution of the elected seats among the various communities. Unfortunately, these arrangements have caused a good deal of discontent amongst Hindus, who under the previous system of distribution had a representation more than proportioned

to their population and voting strength. Communal friction has in many places seriously interfered with administration. It is reported that the question of milk supply is neglected, and that the terrible condition of the roads in most municipalities is a witness to the indifference of the members to matters of practical importance. Fortunately, municipal finance is now in a satisfactory position. District boards have also shared in the prevailing tendency to liberalisation. The system of election has been introduced in eleven boards, whose members were formerly nominated; in the remaining seventeen the elected element has been increased; and the official element has been reduced throughout. This reconstruction has undoubtedly increased public interest in the boards' activities; while the election of sub-committees to deal with specific branches of the administration has brought members into closer touch with their work. Finances are in a more satisfactory position than last year, income more than balancing expenditure throughout the province. The imposition of profession taxes upon those who do not pay land revenue is beginning to prove a valuable source of income to some boards. The allocation of expenditure still provides some grounds for criticism by the provincial government. The sums devoted to education are said to be higher than the boards can really afford; and have been accompanied by serious starvation of medical relief and communications. The authorities fear that the deterioration of the roads is likely, within a short time, to be extremely serious unless larger sums are devoted to their maintenance; and the condition of the provincial communication system will probably remain unsatisfactory so long as local bodies continue to spend a disproportionate share of their resources upon other heads.

The United Provinces.

In the United Provinces, the financial position of municipalities remained unsatisfactory; their expenditure exceeding their income by over rupees twelve lakhs. Indeed, in certain municipalities the financial position was so serious that a special officer was deputed to enquire into their circumstances. The local Government is of opinion that the first requisite is a rigorous policy of economy, to be followed, if necessary, by fearless taxation. Both courses will be unpopular; but fortunately the elections of 1923 have resulted in the return of a large number of young men keenly desirous of improving the local administration. They have entered on their duties with zeal; and while the difficulties which confront them are serious, there remains but little ground for pessimism. The district boards have been reconstituted in accordance with democratic principles.

They, like the municipalities, are entering upon their duties under serious financial difficulties. The executive services, educational, medical and others, have become more costly than before; while there is a universal demand for more and more schools, more hospitals, more sanitary improvements, and better roads. To discharge these important duties, the boards must increase their income. The new Act has conferred powers of taxation upon them; but it seems doubtful whether the members will be prepared, at least for some time, to face the unpopularity which the exercise of these powers will entail. Further retrenchment in expenditure will certainly affect the well-being of the public; so that in the last resort additional taxation is the only remedy. As in the case of the municipalities, it is pleasant to record that the new members have taken to their duties in a spirit which contrasts refreshingly with the apathy too often displayed by members of the older boards.

Bihar and Orissa.

In Bihar and Orissa it is reported that the attention focussed on local self-government in the Legislative Council has had a quickening effect on the activities of all local bodies. During the year, elections under the new Act were held in all the municipalities; and it is hoped that the recently constituted bodies will face their responsibilities both with keenness and with efficiency. The position is however somewhat difficult. The reports for 1923 show eleven municipalities whose financial position is unsatisfactory, while in nineteen others liabilities exceeded assets. With the practical abolition of internal control, the municipal commissioners have now full power to frame their own budget. Efficient administration will thus depend very largely upon the interest taken by the ratepayers in the conduct of their representatives. In which connection the formation of ratepayers' associations is a hopeful sign. In the course of 1924, district boards will also be reconstituted on an elective basis. Already there are signs of a revived interest in their activities; but here as elsewhere, the chief problem is that of finance. The existing income of the boards is still insufficient to meet the increasing demands upon their purse; while the local Government is not in a position to supplement the deficiency. The heaviest item of expenditure is still that on civil works, which account for 49 per cent. of the total. Education and medical relief figure at 19 per cent. and 12 per cent. respectively. In view however of the extensive and justifiable demand for the development of primary education, it seems likely that expenditure upon educational activities will before long bulk as largely here as in other provinces.

In the Central Provinces, the administration of local affairs by municipalities and district councils has been fairly satisfactory. Municipal income is rising; and with the passing of the new act of 1922, general interest in municipal work is likely to increase. The franchise has been so far extended as to give the vote to all persons whose monthly income is not less than Rs. 10. The scope and importance of municipal functions has been greatly increased; and it is believed that if full advantage is taken of the new powers by the recently enfranchised electors, the whole complexion of local politics will be radically changed. Unfortunately, it is reported that many municipal elections have been fought on political lines, with the result that the new committees have tended to waste time and energy over infructuous discussion, to the detriment of local affairs. District councils have been similarly affected by politics, though to a less degree. So far, there is little evidence of an increased interest in their working among the general public. It is yet to be seen to what extent the powers newly entrusted to the members, and relaxation of official control, will lead to an early manifestation of increased efficiency.

The Central Provinces.

In Bengal it is reported that the year under review has witnessed no very marked improvement in the general level of municipal administration. Many chairmen and vice-chairmen cannot afford the time which municipal affairs require, with the result that too much responsibility is entrusted to badly paid subordinates. Municipal income is as a whole still inadequate, and the incidence of taxation amounts only to two rupees fourteen annas per head of population. Some municipalities have increased their rates, and revised their assessments in a stringent manner. But generally speaking, there has been little scope for the fulfilment of badly wanted schemes of improvement. Much is hoped from the new Municipal Bill, at present on the anvil in Bengal. This will not only give increased independence by devolution and by the relaxation of official control, but will also confer ample powers to increase taxation, to enforce the improvement of insanitary buildings and areas; to control epidemic diseases; to regulate the sale of food stuffs; and to encourage the expansion of primary education. So far as district boards are concerned, their administration by non-official chairmen has proved on the whole satisfactory. In general, both chairmen and members have evinced great interest in their work, and have made many sacrifices to carry it on. The available funds are however inadequate to meet pressing demands. The twenty-six district boards of the province are primarily responsible

Bengal.

for the health and convenience of a population of more than 42,000,000 in an area of 72,000 square miles. But their revenue in 1922-23 was a little over rupees 115 lakhs, which allows an expenditure of just over four annas per head. With this small sum it is impossible to provide those facilities for water supply, drainage, improved communications, education, sanitation, and the like, for which people in the urban areas pay nearly fifteen times as much. The question of augmenting the resources of the district boards has been considered by the Conference of district boards representatives, which is held annually; and a bill providing for further financial powers has been introduced into the legislature. But the real future of district board administration probably lies in and through the organization of local resources, for which ample scope is afforded by the existence of the union boards. Already progress in the sphere of village self-government, to which reference has been made above, is gratifying; and many union boards are performing steady work in connection with village roads, improved water supply, and the provision of other amenities. Union benches and union courts are gradually becoming popular; while certain responsibilities hitherto exercised by the police have been made over to union boards officials.

Bombay.

In Bombay, the policy of freeing municipalities from internal control has been carried to its last stage. All municipalities now elect their own presidents; the number of nominated members has been reduced to a minimum; and the qualifications of electors are now theoretically based on the widest possible franchise. Yet it is reported that the working of the 159 municipalities in the Province has been on the whole disappointing. The local Government remarks that these bodies are too often regarded as mere debating societies; with whose members the social distinction of councillorship outweighs all sense of civic responsibility. And while the municipalities, now exempt from official control, have full opportunity of showing that private citizens can manage the affairs of their own town, no board has seriously applied itself to the task of putting its house in order. The finances of very few municipalities are in a sound condition; and even when normal obligations can be met, there is no working margin in hand for emergencies. Taxation of any kind, and particularly direct taxation, is apt to be shirked on account of the odium attaching to it. Municipal functions are incompletely performed, and few systematic attempts are being made to provide for the needs of the towns. It is sincerely to be hoped that the present unsatisfactory state of affairs is but a temporary phase; and that the members of the muni-

cipalities will soon take a more serious view of their responsibility to the public. In regard to local boards, there is a more cheerful story to record. The people in general are taking a greater interest in local board affairs; the members are displaying considerable energy; while the non-official presidents and vice-presidents are working well. The new Local Boards Act has conferred upon these bodies wide powers of taxation; and increased resources should enable them to fulfil their functions more fully. The new Primary Education Act enables them to embark on the expansion of elementary education in a systematic manner. The financial position is generally more satisfactory than in the case of the municipalities; but increased expenditure on a large scale will inevitably result from the new functions entrusted to them.

In Madras, the system of appointing councillors by election is in force in all the municipalities; while of the total strength of 80, no less than half consist entirely of Indian members. The financial position is satisfactory; and several municipalities have taken loans from Government for drainage, water-supply, and lighting schemes. In the case of local boards also, revenue exceeds expenditure in a satisfactory manner. All the district boards, except that of the Nilgiris, are now presided over by non-officials, two of whom are elected. The working of taluk and union boards continued satisfactory. The principal items of expenditure in the order of their importance are communications, education and public health. Government now gives assistance towards the cost of the cadre of District Board Engineers, and the pay of medical officers in charge of headquarters hospitals. The system of payment of trunk-road and other grants was revised so as to substitute payment during the course of the year for post-payment. This will have a beneficial effect upon the "ways and means" position of the boards. The accounts have been simplified in order that boards may keep them for themselves. In the future, boards will be left free to elect their own presidents, save in special circumstances.

Madras.

In the sections immediately preceding we have briefly described the working of the institutions upon which the future structure of self-government must ultimately be based. We must now examine the machinery by which society, in securing itself from disorder and anarchy, makes peaceful progress possible in this as well as in other directions. The principal arm of the State for the preservation of order among the 247,000,000 persons who inhabit British India, is the Police Force. The Indian

Peace and Order.

Police consists of about 1,073 officers of the rank of deputy superintendent and upwards, together with some 200,000 officers and men of lower grades. In addition to the civil police, there are some 19,000 officers and men of the military police, located in the wilder parts of the country. Of these more than half belong to Burma.

The Indian Police : Small Cost.

We may notice that the cost of the police force in India is small as compared with Western standards. The average annual cost of the Indian policeman varies from £38 to £19 according to locality. We may compare these figures with the average yearly cost of a policeman in the counties and boroughs of England and Wales, which is just under £270. Somewhat naturally wages in the Force are low. The salaries of sub-inspectors range from Rs. 116 per mensem, to Rs. 97 per mensem; while the pay of a constable varies from Rs. 21 per mensem to Rs. 17 per mensem. Altogether, police protection costs the Indian taxpayer something less than 1 shilling per head per annum. When all allowance is made for the difference in cost of living between India and England, the fact remains that it is found impossible to recruit for service in the Indian police a class of man corresponding to that which has brought the Force in England into such deservedly high repute. Roughly half the Indian police are illiterate. In certain provinces, the literacy-average is comparatively high, amounting indeed in Madras to more than 90 per cent.; but in the majority of the provinces it is far less satisfactory. No lengthy argument is needed to show the great handicap which illiteracy must constitute to the constable in the discharge of his important duties. It would be a mistake to imagine that the Administration are not fully alive to the necessity of attracting a better class of men to service in the Force. Efforts are continuously being made to staff the intermediate ranks by the direct recruitment of men of good family, whose standards of personal honour may be expected to produce beneficial results upon the general morale and integrity. But the root question is one of finance, and despite the efforts which have been made within the last few years to improve the conditions in which the rank and file work, much still remains to be done. Schemes have been put forward for providing the Police with suitable accommodation; for maintaining a more adequate leave reserve; and for increasing the rewards to be won by good service. In addition, special concessions such as outfit and uniform allowances, and increased allow-

Low Wages and Illiteracy.

Attempts at Improvement.

ances payable to candidates under training, have been granted in the various provinces. In consequence, there has been no general shortage of recruitment; and it is reported that in most provinces there is little difficulty in keeping the cadre up to full strength. But until the scale of wages can be placed on an entirely different footing from that which exists at present, there seems little hope of attracting, at least into the rank and file, the type of man who is really required to raise the reputation of the Indian police to the same level as that of the corresponding Force in England. Further, the natural limitations of the man now generally recruited for service in the Force is such that efficiency can never proceed beyond certain modest limits. In every country, the scientific study of crime is now essential for successful police work. Specialised central organisations, whose sole duty it is to study and tabulate the *modus operandi* of each professional criminal, have become a necessity if the struggle with crime is to be successfully conducted. In India, it has hitherto been found impossible to set up organizations of the requisite efficiency. For in the first place, the cost has been pronounced prohibitive; and in the second place, the type of mind from which such organizations must necessarily be staffed is far less common among the low-paid Indian policemen, than among their more fortunately situated comrades in other countries. But considering the difficulties under which the Indian Policeman works, his efficiency is remarkable. His discipline shows steady signs of improvement, and departmental punishments are on the decline.

Standards of Efficiency.

There is no question but that the task of the Indian police is one which might well tax all the energies of the highlypaid Forces in existence in other countries. To begin with, there is an extraordinary diversity of culture among the immense population inhabiting British India. The Indian policeman has to deal at one end of the scale with the ingenious criminal population of great cities; who are fully as expert in their nefarious practices as the most skilful of their Western confreres. At the other end of the scale he is brought into contact with individuals or communities deeply tinged with those darker superstitions which have now almost disappeared from the ken of Europe; such for example as that Kayasth devotee of the Black Art, who during 1922 murdered two women in Lucknow to propitiate his pet owl, and was subsequently declared insane; such also as those Katkaris of the Kolaba District who beat a woman to death on the supposition that she was casting spells over their

Work of the Police.

children. Between these two extremes of crime there stands an infinite gradation, ranging from ordinary theft, which is common in every country, to human sacrifice, which is still practised in certain remote fastnesses of the Burma-Assam border. In short, the work of the Indian police both in its extent and in its variety, is probably unique. It is further noticeable that among the masses who make up British India, there exist many acute differences of custom and creed, which may at any time be the occasion for violent conflict. Popular excitement is readily aroused on matters affecting religion; and within the space of a few hours a community of apparently peaceful and law-abiding persons may be temporarily metamorphosed into a dangerous mob. The police are thus frequently called upon to face situations of the most serious kind; and where communal questions are concerned, it is only natural that the impartiality of the individual policeman should be occasionally called in question. Moreover, in the fulfilment of his always exacting and frequently dangerous functions, the policeman in India cannot rely to the same extent as his comrade in other countries upon the sympathy and co-operation of the individual citizen. With some of the causes which seem at present to lie at the root of this attitude on the part of the public, we shall have occasion to deal in a succeeding paragraph; but apart from any temporary exacerbation of relations between the policeman and the citizen, there remains the broad fact that civic responsibility in India has not attained a level corresponding to that of Western countries. In view of the fact that the structure of peace and order characteristic of the British Raj has been so largely imposed upon the people from above, it is not perhaps surprising to find that the average individual considers he has small part or lot in its maintenance. But in the case of the Indian States the position does not seem to be substantially different. Here also, the order maintained by the police is regarded as something for which they themselves rather than the public at large, are primarily responsible. In short, the main difficulty seems to be that the people of India have become accustomed throughout the centuries to a rule imposed, as it were, from without; which is independent of their volition and has no roots in their consciousness. So long as the individual citizen does not conceive of the State as something that has definite claims upon his co-operation, it seems unlikely that the policeman will receive that support in his duties, without which both his integrity and his efficiency can hardly rise much above their present level.

General Difficulties.

These permanent factors, which of themselves constitute a serious handicap to the work of the police in India, have of recent years been reinforced by certain temporary influences making in the same direction. The reports of the Provincial Governments are unanimous in the contention that one effect of the non-cooperation campaign has been to inoculate the masses far and wide with a contempt for constituted authority. Constant declamations against law and order, whatever the motives of the declaimers, cannot but encourage those persons who are naturally prone to indulge in anti-social activities. Hence quite apart from the difficulties to which the non-cooperation campaign, in its strictly non-violent aspects, has exposed the police, in common with other branches of the Administration, local Governments are generally of opinion that there has been a deplorable relaxation of that restraint upon violent crime which the forces of order normally exercise. One consequence of the weakening of the authority of the police has been an increase in dacoity or gang robbery, which at the best of times is one of the most formidable problems which India presents. Bands of depredators, composed commonly of men of violent character and bad life, combine to rob and murder peaceful villagers in circumstances of almost inconceivable brutality. In the United and Central Provinces, in Central India and to a less extent in Bombay, gang robbery has attained serious dimensions during the period under review. One of the difficulties of bringing dacoits to book is the fact that they commit such terrible atrocities both upon their victims and upon those whom they suspect of giving information to the police, that the average local inhabitant is reluctant to take any share in assisting the authorities to suppress them. In the course of the year 1923 a gang of dacoits in the Borsad Taluk of the Bombay Presidency spread terrorism to such a degree that ordinary law and order were seriously threatened. The local Government was not convinced that the inhabitants of this area were doing their duty to the State; additional police were therefore quartered on the locality, and the cost charged to the people. Under the leadership of certain non-cooperation stalwarts, the residents declined to pay, alleging that Government had itself failed in its duty of suppressing the dacoits; and early in 1924 the Bombay authorities met popular opinion by withdrawing the punitive cess which had hitherto been levied. Apart from its political aspect, the incident is illustrative of the difficulties to which the police are from time to time exposed. Indeed, the terrorism which dacoits sedulously

Special Difficulties.

Dacoity.

cultivate is of incalculable assistance to them; the commission of successful crime over a considerable period not infrequently investing the criminal with a reputation of in[illegible] the [illegible] credulous. In consequence, the police in operating against notorious gangs can count on but little active assistance, at least in the immediate locality; and it is only when a successful enterprise has broken the power of the dacoits that people in general have the courage to testify to the detestation which dacoity inspires in them. Towards the end of 1923 a gallant piece of work on the part of the United Provinces police led to the capture of a Bhantu gang which had for long terrorised certain districts. The exploit evoked the most extraordinary enthusiasm among the local public. The police, returning in triumph with their captives, were received by a cheering crowd. Bazars were lavishly decorated; addresses and garlands were forced upon the officers. And yet, until the reputation which dacoit gangs have built up for themselves is shattered by the enterprise and determination of the police, public opinion seems, doubtless in many cases through sheer fright, almost acquiescent. It is however to be noticed as a symptom of better things that the villagers in tracts particularly susceptible to the dacoity nuisance are beginning to display greater courage and greater resolution in defending themselves against attack. In the United Provinces, in particular, plucky resistances are now the order of the day where dacoits are bold enough to attack whole villages; but the police still find it remarkably difficult to secure conclusive evidence against gangs brought up for trial. This is of course not remarkable in view of the fact that dacoits have been known to roast victims alive on a slow fire in cases where they suspected that information was being given to the police. Occasionally, we may notice, an enterprise which presents the appearance of a dacoity is later seen to display the characteristics of a regular rebellion. Such is the case with the rising, until recently still formidable, in the Gudem Hills of the Madras Presidency. Thanks to the ascendency which the chief figure, one Razu, had attained in the locality, the movement quickly attained serious proportions after one or two initial successes. The difficulties of the country and the skill displayed in ambushing pursuing parties, exposed the police to severe loss; and it was ultimately found necessary to requisition the services of the military police. At the moment of writing, news has been received of the death of Razu, and it is understood that the movement has been be entirely suppressed.

The general situation of the country during 1923-24 has thrown upon the shoulders of the police special duties of an extremely unpleasant

kind. Mention was made in last year's report of the fact that the police have been compelled on various occasions to oppose and disperse bands of Akali Sikhs. Fortunately, during the period now under review, there has been no such incident as that of Guru-ka-Bagh ; but the strained relations still unfortunately persisting between the Sikh reforming party, and the Government have placed a considerable burden upon the police. The decision of the leaders of the reforming party to constitute " non-violent " *morchas*—literally appointed places for a combat—both at Bhai Pheru and at Jaiton, have compelled the police to arrest Sikh volunteers in large numbers. With the details of the Sikh grievance in each of these places we are not at the moment concerned. It suffices to notice that both in these localities, and in the arrests which took place near the sacred Akal Takht, the police have behaved with the utmost consideration and with every care for the susceptibilities of those whom their duty compelled them to arrest. Generally speaking, the Akalis have remained true to the vow of non-violence with which their enterprise was consecrated ; but on more than one occasion the police in the exercise of their duty have been subjected to very rough handling by excited mobs. Fortunately, however, their discipline has proved equal to the strain ; and despite the popular odium to which the performance of their task has exposed them, the number of well substantiated complaints against them has been remarkably small. Another occasion when the police came into conflict with the exponents of non-cooperation was provided by the " National Flag," agitation at Nagpur of which an account is given in a subsequent chapter. Here also the good temper and self-control of the Force was displayed in trying circumstances.

Unpleasant Duties.

During the period immediately under review, communal tension has imposed a serious obligation upon the police. Throughout the earlier days of the non-cooperation movement, the combination of Hindus and Muhammedans on a common platform in opposition to Government, accounted for a marked and gratifying absence of religious riots. But subsequent events have led to a weakening of the bond which produced the entente ; and at the present moment the differences between the two communities are among the outstanding factors of the general situation. Mention was made in last year's report of the serious Hindu-Muslim riots which broke out at Multan in September 1922. Even after peace had been restored, the local relations between the two communities continued so unsatisfactory that an unfortunate effect was exercised not only upon the

Communal Tension.

Punjab, but also upon many other parts of India. In the course of the year 1923-24 communal feeling has shown no signs of abatement. There have been serious breaches of the peace between Hindus and Musalmans at Amritsar in May, at Ajmere and Saharanpur in August. Sometimes one, sometimes the other community has been the aggressor; but in every instance the police have been compelled to bear the brunt of the disturbance.

Recrudescence of Anarchy.

A particularly sinister feature has been the recrudescence of anarchical movements. During 1922, as we noticed in last year's statement, anarchical crime was fortunately absent; but the warning was given that it would be premature to conclude that the old party of anarchy had either disappeared or had abandoned its designs. Early in the year 1923 Government received information that some ex-revolutionaries in East Bengal were again engaging in loot, and devoting part of it to political purposes. At the same time the desirability of renewing revolutionary activity on the old lines was being discussed. From the beginning of the hot weather a series of armed dacoities, culminating in the murder of the postmaster of the Sankaritolla Post Office in broad daylight, took place in Calcutta and its outskirts, in which the methods employed were remarkably similar to those of the old revolutionary gangs. The arrest of the murderer and the receipt of further definite information enabled a conspiracy case to be instituted against certain persons. The situation began to assume a serious aspect, as Government became possessed of evidence of the existence of a wide-spread revolutionary conspiracy. In August 1923, in proroguing the Bengal Legislature Lord Lytton, the Governor of the Presidency, pointed out the implications of the movement. He stated that organised revolutionary societies, of which Bengal has had such an unhappy experience, had once more come into existence. It was no case, he continued, of mere political opposition, of criticism of Government or of seditious propaganda. There was a conspiracy of dangerous, fanatical criminals, among whom violence was an acknowledged creed, and terrorism a deliberate policy. The Governor's speech led to considerable comment, much of which revealed scepticism as to the seriousness of the situation. But by the middle of September it became apparent to the authorities that strong measures alone could avert another outbreak of political crime and assassination. Resort was had to an emergency law, and the detention of some of the more prominent members of the revolutionary movement was sanctioned. This step excited unfavourable criticism

among many sections of the public, who were reluctant in the first place to believe that matters were as bad as Government maintained; and in the second place viewed with disfavour the detention of individuals without trial. The press as a whole commented unfavourably; but when Government took pains to lay before representative journalists the kind of information upon which their policy was based, organised propaganda began in a group of journals for the purpose of counteracting revolutionary crime. Unfortunately, there is still a section of the press in Bengal which, in addition to promoting the spread of academic bolshevism, continues to glorify in scarcely veiled terms the exploits of former revolutionaries. The anniversary of the death of Jotindra Nath Mukherjea, who after a series of daring murders and taxi-cab robberies had attempted to organise a revolution in India with German help, was celebrated in different papers by long and laudatory notices. He was held up as the idol of the youth of Bengal, and as an exemplar of how life may be fulfilled by welcoming death. It is important in this connection to remember that the issue between the authorities and the anarchists is still somewhat clouded in the eyes of certain persons by the consideration first that the anarchists are fellow-Indians while the Government is regarded as alien, and secondly by the fact that anarchical crime, which scarcely touches large numbers of the public, is not connected in the popular mind with those dangerous implications which cause the authorities to regard it so gravely. Thus, while, as we shall have occasion to notice on a later page, demands for the release of persons interned for alleged complicity in revolutionary crime have been continuously voiced by responsible individuals and by reputable journals, the actual amount of sympathy existing in the minds of the general public either for these outrages, or for those who commit them, as opposed to those who are suspected of complicity, is extremely limited. The murder, early in 1924, of Mr. Day, an Englishman who had no connection with Government, but was mistaken by a young Bengali anarchist for a high police official, aroused strong feeling among the Indian, as well as the European, population of Calcutta. But there is an undoubted tendency to overlook the immense harm that can be caused to immature and emotional youths by pronouncements which would seem, with whatever reservations, to endorse and extol revolutionary methods. In another part of India during the same period there has also been an anarchical movement of a formidable kind. In the Punjab, a gang of revolutionaries, who posed as enthusiastic

Attitude of the Public.

In the Punjab.

exponents of the Sikh cause, committed a series of cold-blooded murders through the Jullundur and Hoshiarpur districts. The victims were in all cases persons known to be well-disposed and loyal to the Government; but the prospect of loot seems in many cases to have afforded an additional incentive to the murderers. A cyclostyled leaflet was circulated advocating the use of violence as opposed to the non-violent doctrines adopted by the Sikh reforming leaders. Soldiers were incited to murder their officers and the people at large were called upon to kill all foreigners. So bold and so violent did the gang become within a short space of time, that a state of terrorism prevailed throughout the two districts. The authorities took vigorous action; but not until a large force of extra police, supported by the military, had come into operation, was it found possible to convince peaceable persons that the resources of the so-called Babar Akalis were unequal to their designs. A series of affrays between the criminals and the forces of order took place; as a result of which the gang was crushed, and its individual components one by one rounded up after desperate resistance. The relief of the localities when the incubus which had oppressed them had disappeared, was very great. It should be noticed that the Babar Akali organization was from the beginning denounced by more responsible sections of the Sikh community.

The Police and the Public.

We have now passed in brief review certain of the difficulties which attend police work in India. In the light of the facts already noticed, regarding the low level of wages prevalent in the force, and the corresponding limitation upon the social and educational qualifications of the rank and file, it would be no matter for surprise if the heavy burden imposed upon the Indian Police were too great for them to bear. But on the whole it may be said that their work is remarkably efficient; and that they discharge their difficult duties in a manner which redounds to their credit. There is, however, no disguising the fact that they are not popular with the general public. They are indiscriminately accused of high-handedness, of corruption, and of oppression. But it is only fair to remember that misconduct on the part of any member of the force, however humble, is eagerly seized upon in the public press, which is often prone to assume that the whole organization may be judged by isolated instances of bad behaviour. Further, in times of agitation, such as India is now passing through, the policeman, as the aim of the Executive, is frequently brought into direct conflict with the exponents of political ideas. The non-cooperation campaign has thus been res-

ponsible for throwing the constabulary more than ever upon their own resources, and for widening the gulf which divides them from the sympathies of the general public. This is realised by the authorities, who of recent years have done much to introduce improvements into the conduct and discipline of the police. Local Governments generally are now taking great pains to instruct members of the force, by means of training courses and special schools, in their duties towards the public. Stress is laid not merely upon technical efficiency in the discharge of professional duties, but also upon the necessity of courtesy and civility towards individual citizens. In point of fact, the faults of which the police are still freely accused, are now steadily diminishing. But it may be questioned whether the force can hope to enjoy the esteem and confidence of the public at large, so long as it is popularly associated, at least in the eyes of the politically-minded classes, with the maintenance of the present governmental regime. For there is a natural disposition to identify the police with the existence of the British Raj; and to regard them as obstacles to the achievement of India's national aspirations. There is a tendency to ignore the fact that any government, whether indigenous or foreign, must necessarily maintain order; and in the process is obliged to restrain by various means those activities which it regards as subversive of its own authority. It is indeed unquestionable that political considerations do in practice lie very largely at the root of the unpopularity of the police in India. This is not however the whole explanation; for among classes of society which are at present scarcely interested in political progress, the police are also not infrequently regarded with dislike not unmixed with fear. In times of crisis when dangerous disturbances have to be suppressed, or a locality has to be defended against the ravages of dacoits, there is an instant demand for their services; and their conduct in circumstances of peril and difficulty is generally applauded. But where, as happens in so many places in India, the local sub-inspector of police is the real representative of the arm of the State throughout a given area, the behaviour of the Police in every day affairs is freely criticised. The road towards winning for the Police an increased measure of public appreciation would seem to lie in so raising the morale and the intelligence of the force that its members may be trusted in all circumstances to use their authority with discretion.

Sources of Distrust.

Possibilities of Improvement.

As has already been noticed, this is partly a question of pure finance, and partly a matter of developing the civic consciousness of the

general population to a point at which the policeman is adequately supported by public opinion in the performance of his proper functions, and overtly condemned for any abuse of the trust reposed in him. When this has been accomplished, there should be little difficulty in bridging the gulf between police and public. The Indian masses are generally law-abiding, and drastic action against offenders arouses little objection, so long as there is no suspicion that the offences are political in their implication. In this respect it is curious to notice the contrast between the bitter feeling aroused among the Bengal public by the detention of suspected anarchists under Regulation III of 1818, and the enthusiastic passing, by representatives of that same public, of the extremely drastic Goondas Act, which provides for the summary deportation from Calcutta of up-country foot-pads. It may therefore be hoped that with the advance of India towards self-government, the political motive which at present underlies a considerable portion of the criticisms directed against the police in certain sections of the Press, may gradually be removed; while steady improvements in conduct and in discipline may simultaneously cause them to be recognised the friends and protectors of the general citizen. Among all grades of the force, there is ample heroism and deep devotion to duty, as many instances during the last few years have shown. The interest excited by the unveiling of the Memorial to the body of police who were cruelly murdered in the performance of their duty at Chauri Chaura affords grounds for hoping that the heavy obligation owed to the Indian police by the peaceful inhabitants of the countryside is beginning to be recognised. In performing the ceremony, Sir William Marris, the Governor of the United Provinces, delivered an impressive address to the memory of the public servants who had fallen. "The cenotaph which I am about to unveil," he said, "bears a medallion on which appears the motto, chosen by His Majesty the King Emperor Edward VII as inscription for the King's Police Medal which he instituted. The words are: 'To guard my people.' These words fittingly express the prime duty of every police officer. They are the servants of the public, employed in the public interests to protect the lives and property of the public, their own countrymen.

Heroism.

"In some quarters there is a tendency to talk about the police as if they were an expensive and unnecessary excrescence on the natural body of the State. I hope it is not mere pedantry to remind such critics that the apparently dissimilar terms 'police' and 'politicians' are

The Chauri Chaura Memorial.

in origin and in essence one: that is to say they equally go back to the ancient conception of a 'polity,' a settled civic existence. But whereas the politician is a secondary product created by the policy, the police, as indeed their name shows, were thought of as identified with the very polity itself; the existence of a police force to ensure order was assumed to be an essential condition of all political life; a condition without which, as Chauri Chaura shows us, there would speedily be no politics and no politicians at all.

"You know how several of the northern districts expressed their gratitude to the police for delivering them from the long and bitter oppression of the Bhantu dacoits. I have been told also that many of the subscriptions paid by private individuals to the relief fund were really made as thank-offerings for police protection afforded them at the time of the agrarian disturbances in 1921-22. This affords hope that in the not distant future the public in India will come to realise that the police are the natural protectors, not only in cases of oppression, but in the many difficulties which best the daily life of the inhabitants of all countries."

The Jails.

A necessary concomitant to the work of the Indian police is the Indian Jail system. There exist in India 42 central jails, 179 district jails and 552 subordinate jails and lock-ups. These institutions accommodate an average daily population of 116,600, the bulk of whom are derived from the agricultural labouring classes. Indian Jails as a whole are very healthy; the average death-rate per cent. being 1·97 as compared with 3 per cent. for the free population. The total expenditure on prisons amounted in 1920-21 to Rs. 153 lakhs, against which must be set Rs. 20 lakhs derived from jail industries.

The Jails Committee.

The maintenance of Indian prisons, though subject to all-India legislation, now falls within the provincial sphere; but the obvious advisability of proceeding on certain general principles of uniform application recently led to the appointment of a Jails Committee. Its report contained the first comprehensive survey of Indian prison-administration which had been made for thirty years; and its recommendations have already given rise to far-reaching developments. Stress was laid by the Committee upon the necessity of improving and increasing existing jail accommodation; of recruiting a better class of warders; of providing education for prisoners; and of developing prison industries so as to meet the needs of the consuming departments of Government. Among other recom-

mendations may be mentioned the separation of civil from criminal offenders; the adoption of the English system of release on licence in the case of adolescents; and the creation of children's courts. Much attention was also devoted in the report to the improvement of the reformative side of the Indian system. The Committee recommended the segregation of habituals; the provision of separate accommodation for under-trial prisoners; the institution of the star-class system, and the abolition of certain disciplinary practices which are liable to harden or degrade the prison population.

Action on the Report.

Consistent action has now everywhere been taken to carry into effect the recommendation of the Jails Committee. Unfortunately the process has been hampered by financial stringency; since many of the changes advocated entail heavy expenditure. Overcrowding, which was noticed by the Committee as a serious defect in several provinces, has now very largely been remedied. Fresh rules have been drawn up to govern such matters as jail punishment and jail offences, while the infliction of whipping is carefully regulated. Solitary confinement has been abolished as a prison punishment; the remission system has been improved; and attempts are now being made to teach the convict a trade which will assist him to become a useful citizen when he has served his sentence. In several provinces special committees have been appointed to advise Government as to the religious needs of the various communities represented in the jail population. Juvenile jails have been instituted; and where they cannot be provided owing to financial stringency, arrangements are being made for the release of child offenders on bail under the custody of their parents. General improvements have also been made in the food and clothing of prisoners; the star-class system is being introduced; and concessions are made in regard to interviews and letters. In several provinces, advisory boards have been constituted to review periodically the sentences of long-term prisoners. The major portion of these reforms have been carried through by the initiative of the provincial governments; the Government of India having for the most part confined their attention to laying down certain general principles in regard to which uniformity is possible.

Reformative Work.

Quite apart from the stress which has recently been laid upon the reformative side of prison work by the Jails Committee, attention has been paid for a good many years to the ameliorative treatment of criminals. In the arrangements made for youthful offenders, India is not far behind modern

administrations in other parts of the world. The Borstal system is flourishing in several provinces; reformatory and industrial schools are now provided in several of the larger cities. Many local governments are devoting particular attention to the institution of children's courts; and both Bengal and Madras have recently embarked upon legislation to provide the machinery by which children who show a tendency to lapse into crime may be removed from pernicious surroundings, and handed over to approved custody. But the success of any movement for reclaiming the criminal classes depends ultimately upon the help of the general public. Voluntary organizations now exist in various parts of India for the benefit of discharged prisoners. The Salvation Army, in India as elsewhere, devote special attention to the care of these unhappy individuals, and provides means of livelihood to prisoners conditionally released. Its work deserves the utmost sympathy and support.

Voluntary Effort.

There also exist in various localities Released Prisoners' Aid Societies; which discover employment for discharged prisoners; restart men in their old business; provide food, clothing and shelter; and generally assist in every way to the rehabilitation of ex-prisoners as useful members of society. At the same time, these organizations endeavour to organise and focus public opinion for the purpose of securing that sentences of imprisonment shall be passed only in cases where offenders cannot adequately be dealt with under the supervision of probation officers. Work of this kind, despite its immense value to society in general, does not attract either the interest or the support of the public at large. There are, it is true, signs that the welfare of the prison population is gradually being recognised as a legitimate object of philanthropic endeavour. In many places it has been found possible to appoint honorary visitors; and the ministration of Muhammadan and Hindu preachers to the jail population is everywhere spreading. The success of the Jail Department on its reformative side is intimately connected with the measure of support which the general public evinces in such activities as those just described.

Of late, the Jail Departments of India have been exposed to a severe strain owing to the sudden emergence into prominence of what are loosely called "political" prisoners. A large proportion of these people were followers of the non-cooperation movement, who had been arrested and sentenced for deliberate defiance of authority. They included persons from almost all classes of society, but were on the whole of a type very different from

Political Prisoners.

the customary jail population. The difficulty of dealing with this influx of individuals many of whom claimed to be acting for conscience's sake, would have been experienced in considerable degree by any prison system; but in India the difficulty was enhanced owing to the fact that the jail authorities are as a rule accustomed to deal primarily with rough, illiterate and dangerous men. Strict discipline is thus eminently characteristic of the Indian system; being indeed essential for the mere safety of the jail. Public opinion in India was deeply moved by stories, in most cases exaggerated, as to the conditions under which these prisoners were made to live. There was indeed a general demand that all of them, irrespective of the exact nature of the offences for which they had been sentenced, should be treated somewhat in the fashion of honoured guests of the Government. The authorities from a very early date devoted considerable attention to the problem. The Government of India, after conferring with representatives of local Governments, issued general instructions to enable prisoners convicted of certain classes of offences to be accorded special treatment. These instructions were not restricted to the case of men sentenced for offences connected with political movements, but applied to all prisoners who fulfilled the prescribed conditions. All persons convicted of an offence involving violence or of an offence against property, or of incitement thereto; all persons hired to commit offences in connection with political movements; all persons convicted of attempts to seduce soldiers or policemen from their allegiance; or of offences directly involving criminal intimidation, were definitely excluded from the special treatment category. With these exceptions, it was laid down that each case should be considered on its merits; and that the selection for differential treatment was to be based upon the status, character, and education of the prisoner, as well as upon the nature of his offence. Prisoners so selected were to be separated from the ordinary jail population; might import their own food and bedding, and wear their own clothes; might possess books and magazines, receive visitors and letters at stated intervals, and enjoy exemption from labour, and from menial duties. Generally speaking, the principles laid down in these instructions were already being acted upon by local Governments. But the concession therein implied were very far from satisfying Indian political opinion. Many of the special class prisoners went out of their way to make things difficult for the authorities, who were compelled to take disciplinary action against them. Moreover, the arrests of large numbers of people in connection with such movements as the Nagpur

Their Treatment.

Flag agitation, and the Morchas at B ai Pheru and Jaiton, swept in to the jails a heterogeneous collection of persons, all of whom were popularly regarded as entitled to the special treatment. Accordingly, during the period under review, the line adopted by the authorities in selecting offenders for this treatment was often criticised. Complaints frequently appeared in the press regarding t e sufferings of this or that personage of local repute; and although the authorities took every possible care to investigate all well-grounded complaints, and to remove their cause, political opinion in India remained dissatisfied. There was a further regrettable consequence of the admission of these prisoners in large numbers to the jails. Their contact with the ordinary convicts, which their numbers made almost inevitable, at least at the commencement of their sentence; and the differential treatment accorded to them, resulted in a general deterioration of the standard of discipline. The administration of the jails became very difficult, especially as the authorities were reluctant to take strong measures against men of refinement and education. At the time of writing, fortunately, there are signs of improvement. Large numbers of these men have now been released, either from the expiration of their sentences or on their own apology; and with the exception of the Sikh volunteers, who still offer themselves for arrest in large numbers, the proportion of persons who have been sentenced to terms of imprisonment for offences arising out of political movements is now greatly reduced.

Law-Making.

In the pages immediately preceding, we have briefly described the machinery by which the law of British India is enforced. We may now consider the manner in which that law is shaped. It has already been pointed out that the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms have introduced considerable modifications into the law-making bodies of India. In the local legislative councils the proportion of official members has now been fixed at a maximum at 20 per cent. while the total personnel has been enlarged. In Madras, Bombay, Bengal and the United Provinces, the number of the members of the legislature is fixed by statute at a minimum which varies from 111 to 125; but in practice these numbers have been generally exceeded, except in the case of Bombay. For example, Madras has nine members in excess of its statutory minimum; Bengal has fifteen, and the United Provinces five. In the Punjab, Bihar and Orissa, and the Central Provinces, the statutory minimum varies from seventy to ninety-eight. In the Central Provinces the minimum figure is adhered to; but

Local Legislatures.

Bihar and Orissa has 103 as against the statutory minimum of 98; and the Punjab has 93 as against the statutory minimum of 83. Throughout the provincial legislatures, elected members are required to constitute at least 70 per cent. of the total strength. The work accomplished by the provincial legislatures during 1923 was impressive. Their legislative activities may best be judged by a summary review. As in 1922, considerable activity was displayed in the matter of local self-government. Municipal Acts of various kinds were passed in Madras, Bengal, the Punjab, and Assam. A Local Self-Government Act was passed by Bihar and Orissa. Port Trust Acts are reported from Madras, Bombay and Bengal. There was also a good deal of important legislation in the sphere of finance. Madras, the United Provinces and the Central Provinces amended the Stamp Act as applicable to these areas. The United and Central Provinces amended their Court Fees Acts; Bombay passed an Entertainments Duties Act; while the United Provinces imposed taxation on motor vehicles. Education also claimed a considerable share of the activities of the local legislatures. Two University Acts were passed in Madras and the Central Provinces; while a third was amended in Bihar and Orissa. The Bombay Legislature passed a very important Primary Education Act. Social legislation was also not lacking; Opium Acts were passed in Bombay and in the Punjab; excise acts in the United Provinces and in the Punjab. Bengal can boast of a progressive Children's Act; and, like Bombay, embarked upon severe restrictions against immoral traffic. Industrial development came in for its share of attention. In Madras and Bihar and Orissa, Acts were passed providing for State Aid to Industries; the Punjab can show an Industrial Loans Act, and a Fisheries Act. Bombay passed a Boiler Inspection Act; and Bengal an Aerial Ropeways' Act. In the sphere of public safety may be noted the Goondas Act and the Village Chaukidari Act in Bengal; a Habitual Offenders Restriction Act and a Rangoon Police Act in Burma. Land revenue and settlement matters were dealt with by a Tenancy Act in Bengal; a Land Revenue Act and the Oudh Rent Act, from the United Provinces; the Chota Nagpur Tenancy Act from Bihar and Orissa; and Land Revenue and Tenancy Acts from the Central Provinces. Among miscellaneous pieces of legislation we may notice a Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act from Bombay; a Smoke Nuisance Act from Bengal; a Students and Juvenile Smoking Act from Assam, and a Food Adulteration Act from Bihar and Orissa. In addition to these more noteworthy

Provincial Legislative Activities : 1923.

pieces of legislation there was a great deal of miscellaneous law-making activity of the kind necessitated by the transfer of many subjects to the control of the new Provincial administrations. It would be instructive, if space permitted, to review in detail the work of the provincial legislatures in various parts of India, but since this is impossible we may for purposes of illustration confine our attention to the single important provincial legislature of Bengal.

The Bengal Legislative Council.

A brief review of the achievements of the first legislative council elected under the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms in the presidency of Bengal, serves to show at once the achievements and the limitations generally characteristic of the new provincial legislatures. It has been pointed out that the functions of a legislative body may be divided under three main heads; the first constructive, including the making of laws and the provision of funds for carrying on the administration; the second inquisitorial, that is to say, the eliciting of information as to the acts and intentions of the executive; and the third critical, comprising scrutiny both of the policy and of the acts of government. During the first year of the existence of the Bengal Council, the attention of the members was concerned almost exclusively with activities which fall under the second and third heads. A powerful volume of criticism was brought to bear upon the whole field of administration, chiefly by means of the discussion of resolutions on matters of general interest. During 1921, one hundred and thirty-five such resolutions were actually debated. It is interesting to compare this figure with those which are derived from the practice of the House of Commons. In 1918, when the House sat for 136 days, the total number of resolutions on matters of general public interest moved by private members, was only 34; and in 1919, when the Commons sat for 163 days, the number of similar resolutions was 41. As regards the second function, the searching nature of the inquisition exercised by the council may be gathered from the fact that nearly 1,300 questions were asked and answered. During the first year, probably on account of the predominance of critical and inquisitorial activities, the legislative achievement of the council was small. In general, the local Government remarks, there was a lack of appreciation of the exact constitutional position as between the reserved and the transferred sides of the executive. Hence arose a certain disposition to treat the administration as being entirely responsible to the council; a misapprehension which doubtless accounts for the very great activity displayed

Practical Achievements.

in attempting to reduce grants for reserved subjects. The second year of the council's work yielded a fair crop of legislative enactments, of which the three most noticeable were fiscal measures, designed to save the finances of the province from collapse. They brought a great deal of obloquy on the legislature, which displayed considerable courage in shouldering its obligations. There were certain other pieces of legislation during the same period which do not call for particular remark. During the last year of the council's work, that is to say 1923, legislative achievements were noteworthy, including an Aerial Ropeways' Act, a Calcutta Port Amendment Act, a Rent Amendment Act, a Goondas Act, a Tenancy Amendment Act, a Suppression of Immoral Traffic Act; and perhaps most important of all, a Calcutta Municipal Act. From the point of view of legislation, the first reformed council in Bengal can thus show a good record. Throughout the whole life of the legislature the number of questions and of resolutions showed no signs of diminishing. The interest of the non-official members spread over the whole field of administrative activity, exercising a considerable influence upon the policy of government. The council employed its financial powers in a manner more extensive than is generally realised. Under the Act, it has the power to refuse a demand for a grant relating to a reserved subject, as well as a demand relating to a transferred subject; but if the Governor considers the grant for the reserved subject essential for the discharge of his responsibility, he may restore it. During the life-time of the first Bengal Council, more than 2,000 motions for reductions of demands for grants were tabled, the majority of which referred to the reserved departments. In consequence of adverse votes, various projects on the reserved side, regarded by Government as of primary importance, were abandoned or postponed. Among other examples may be quoted the partition of the Mymensingh and Midnapore districts, as also the postponement of work on the Grand Trunk Canal. The power of certification was sparingly exercised by the Governor. The Council was insistent in pressing upon the local government the necessity for economy; and in deference to its wishes, expenditure was curtailed to the extent of rupees 89 lakhs in 1921-22, and rupees 48 lakhs in the following year.

General Tendencies.

We may notice in the history of the first Bengal Council the prevalence of certain of those tendencies which have already been described in general terms on an earlier page of this Chapter. In proroguing the legislature on August 31st, 1923, pending its dissolution, Lord Lytton pointed out

that the real meaning of responsible government had not been yet fully appreciated either by the electorate or by the popular representatives. He remarked upon the general failure to distinguish between that portion of the executive which was responsible and that which was still irresponsible. Both were indiscriminately classified as the bureaucracy, and regarded as a fair target for invective. "I feel" he went on "that the experience that has been gained in the last two years and a half has been of the utmost value as a training in the exercise of responsibility; but that the progress made in utilising the machinery of the constitution has been small." It is in fact plain that the first reformed council in Bengal failed, as did corresponding bodies in other provinces, to perceive that it is now in the power of the elected members to control the composition of part of the executive. If the majority of the legislative council can combine into a solid bloc, they are able to ensure that the ministers in charge of transferred subjects shall be selected from their own strength. But the conception of an irresponsible and irremovable executive is at present too deeply engrained to be eradicated all at once. In consequence, as the local Government of Bengal remarks, the opportunities of gaining experience in the exercise of responsibility have so far been largely wasted. After the recent elections, as we shall notice in a subsequent chapter, the entry of the Swaraj Party into the Bengal Council, provided for the first time a compact bloc under an acknowledged leader. Unfortunately, the Swarajists, by their refusal to accept office, voluntarily abdicated the most important power which the present constitution places in the hands of the body of opinion which triumphs at the polls. The Bengal Government considers that it is doubtful if the extent to which the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms have met popular demands is fully realised, judging at least by the imperfect use generally made of the power which popular representatives could wield if the spirit moved them to do so.

The Central Legislature.

Having thus summarised the work accomplished in the first term of a reformed provincial legislature, we may turn to a consideration of the Central law-making bodies of India, and to their activities as revealed in the course of this period. We may recall the fact that the new Government of India Act has substituted for the former Imperial Legislative Council a bi-cameral legislature, composed of two Houses, styled respectively the Council of State and the Legislative Assembly. The Council of State consists of 60 members including the President, of whom 33 are elected, and 27 nominated. Among the nominated members not more than

20 may be, and at present 15 only are, officials. The Legislative Assembly consists of 145 members including the President, of whom 104 are elected and 4 nominated. The nominated members include 26 officials. During the life of the first legislature under the new Government of India Act, popular interest was very largely concentrated upon the Legislative Assembly. The Council of State performed functions of a valuable if unostentatious nature; but it is generally recognised that the second Chamber can scarcely attain its full stature as a revising body until such time as the element of responsibility finds its way into the constitution of the first. It is therefore with the achievements of the first Legislative Assembly, elected under the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms that the succeeding pages will briefly deal.

The First Legislative Assembly.

We may recall that the first reformed elections were fought at a time when large sections of the electorate had abstained, under Mr. Gandhi's influence, from exercising their rights, and when the candidates themselves had to endure much obloquy from fellow-countrymen whose esteem they highly valued. It was thus in circumstances of considerable tension that the legislative assembly had met in Delhi in February 1921. Within a week of its inauguration, the Chamber was asked, on a motion by Mr. Jamnadas Dwarkadas, to discuss the administration of martial law in the Punjab during 1919. Government was called upon to express regret that the administration in question departed from the principles of racial equality, on which India's connection with the British Empire was based; to mete out punishment to officers guilty of improper use of their power; and to see that adequate compensation was given to the families of those killed or injured at Jalianwalla Bagh. The debate which followed did much to exercise the Punjab spectre. European and Indian speakers alike, recalling the Duke of Connaught's recent appeal "to bury along with the dead past, the mistakes and misunderstandings of the past" urged the withdrawal of that part of the motion which called for further punitive action. The resolution as amended was carried unanimously, to the immense benefit of the general political atmosphere of India.

The First Session.

The Assembly early concerned itself with matters of high policy. The most important debate of the first session was connected with the adoption of a proposition that "the Army in India should be entirely under the control, real as well as nominal, of the Government of India, and should be free from any domination or interference by the War Office, on matters of military policy,

organization or administration; and such co-ordination as may be desirable between the military policies or organizations of different parts of the Empire should be secured by discussion and agreement at conferences at which India would be adequately represented." The important principle recognised in this resolution was emphasised later in the session by a comprehensive series of motions connected with the report of the Esher Committee. These were in the main accepted by Government, and gave formal sanction to the progressive Indianisation of the commissioned ranks of the Army, and to the placing of that Army upon a national basis. Among other notable achievements of the first session may be mentioned the appointment of committees whose labours resulted in the repeal of the Press Act, and of certain measures of a character generally described as repressive. Mention must also be made of the appointment of a Commission to examine the tariff question, which was the first fruits of the Parliamentary Joint Committee's pronouncement on India's autonomy in fiscal matters. A notable step in paving the way for the Assembly's control over the expenditure of the Government of India was also taken, in the establishment of a Standing Finance Committee. That the newly elected members were not afraid of facing the obligations laid upon them by the constitution was proved by the fact that they agreed to the imposition of enhanced taxation in order to balance a deficit budget.

In the Simla session of 1921, the Assembly was called upon to consider a political situation even more serious than that which had faced it in February. The non-cooperation movement had increased in vehemence; the activities of the Khilafatists in Malabar had evoked a dangerous rebellion; and Mr. Gandhi had declared his intention of organising a boycott of the projected visit of the Prince of Wales. Government laid their cards frankly upon the table, and called upon the Assembly to support them in their policy. In consequence, the steps which were being taken to deal with the Moplah outbreak, were strongly endorsed; the line adopted in connection with the non-cooperation campaign was approved; and the proposed visit of the Prince of Wales heartily acclaimed. In other directions also, the Assembly performed valuable work. A committee was appointed to consider what amendments could be made in the Criminal Procedure Code for removing racial distinction between Englishmen and Indians in criminal trials. This committee subsequently produced a report, now embodied in legislation, which represented an achievement of no little political value in the removal of a longstanding grievance. That the Assembly was

not satisfied with the existing constitutional position appeared from the resolution, passed without division, recommending that the Secretary of State should be informed that in the view of the Chamber, the progress made by India on the path of responsible government warranted a re-examination of the constitution at an earlier date than that prescribed in the Government of India Act. The substance of this resolution, it may be remarked, received continuous and emphatic endorsement in later debates. But the reality of the power exercised by the elected members over the policy of the executive, received a remarkable illustration in this very session, when a grant for the expenses of the projected Indian tour of Lord Lytton's Committee on Indian Students was rejected. Another advance registered by the Assembly in the financial sphere was seen in the new income tax bill, which laid down the lines on which income tax should be collected, but left the imposition of any particular figure to be settled year by year between the executive and the legislature. This first Simla session was also noteworthy from an attempt which was made to constitute parties in the assembly. The project was defective owing to the absence of any real support outside the walls of the chamber; to the laxity of discipline which even to the end the organizers were unable to remedy; as well as to the absence of those clear-cut divisions of political opinion among members of the legislature without which party differences necessarily remain artificial. It must however be credited to the political acumen of the members of the first assembly that they early realised the desirability of a party organization, fully appreciating the additional influence which such a system would enable them to exercise in determining the policy of the executive.

The support which the Executive Government received from the Legislature, was of great value throughout the whole of this critical period. The non-cooperation movement had now reached its zenith. Riots and disorders were occurring in many localities; and the authorities were compelled to take action of a character which the situation seemed to demand. The Liberal Party which was predominant in the Assembly, while strongly disapproving of the methods of the non-cooperators, gradually became uneasy lest the policy of Government should be carried to a point at which general political activities would be rendered difficult. They were however disillusioned as to the possibility of coming to terms with the non-cooperation leaders, by the breakdown of the project for a round table conference. Accord-

Uneasiness of the Assembly.

ingly, when the Assembly met at Delhi in January 1922, Government was able to secure the rejection of a resolution, moved by an Independent member, calling upon them to abandon their policy. But while non-official members were generally prepared to support the authorities in reasonable measures directed against the disorderly implications of Mr. Gandhi's campaign, there remained an undercurrent of uneasiness, which was considerably reinforced by the resignation of Mr. E. S. Montagu from the Secretaryship of State for India. During this same session both European and Indian non-official members continued to press for constitutional advance, taking as their immediate objective the removal of the distinction between votable and non-votable items in the Budget. The financial activities of the Assembly were very noteworthy. In response to its insistent demand for economy in Central expenditure, Government agreed to appoint a Committee to report on the possibility of retrenchment in all branches. The eventual outcome of this decision was the constitution of the committee presided over by Lord Inchcape, which in 1923 overhauled, with drastic results, the entire expenditure of the Government of India.

Retrenchment.

Called upon once more to meet a deficit budget, the Assembly took up a very strong line. It refused to sanction the proposed doubling of the salt-tax, and cut down the demands for grants by what was generally an arbitrary percentage. In this way considerable reductions were made in the proposed expenditure, while the estimated revenue was reduced by nine and a half crores. Government being now committed to a policy of thorough-going retrenchment, did not exercise its reserve powers to upset this decision. The proof of the influence which the Assembly can exercise over the purse was still further marked by the acceptance of the suggestion that the Standing Finance Committee should be entitled to scrutinise all proposals for new votable expenditure, to sanction allotments out of lump-sum grants, to suggest retrenchment and economy, and generally to assist the Finance Department. The Assembly also devoted considerable attention to the question of Indianisation. In the debate on a resolution to establish the principle that recruitment for the All-India services, except those of a technical character, should be made in India, the House accepted a Government amendment that enquiries should be made from the Provincial Governments on the measures possible for the increased recruiting of Indians for the services. In fulfilment of this promise, the O'Donnell circular was issued, which formed one of the incidents leading up to

Indianisation.

the appointment by His Majesty's Government of a Royal Commission on the Public Services, under the chairmanship of Lord Lee of Fareham. In consequence of another resolution, a committee was appointed to consider the measures to be taken for the establishment of a nautical college, for training of Indians for the higher ranks of the Royal Indian Marine, and for the encouragement of the growth of an Indian mercantile marine. Strong nationalist tendencies found further expression in the discussion of the Kenya question which had again come to the forefront on account of Mr. Winston Churchill's recent speech.

Third Session.

The third and last session of the First Assembly opened at Simla in September 1922. The uneasiness of the elected members arising from the causes previously mentioned, had been further enforced by Mr. Lloyd George's speech on the general situation in India and on the future of the All-India services. Despite Lord Reading's assurances that the policy of His Majesty's Government remained unchanged, the Assembly passed a resolution which was in effect a censure upon Mr. Lloyd George. Symptoms of strained relations between the Executive and the Legislature shortly developed in connection with a proposal to introduce legislation to prevent the dissemination of disaffection against the Indian States.

Tension.

This was the outcome of an undertaking given to the Princes as a corollary to the repeal of the Press Acts. The Assembly considered that the bill violated the spirit in which that repeal had been undertaken; and took the unprecedented course of refusing leave for introduction. As a result, the Viceroy's power of certification had for the first time to be invoked. The Session was also remarkable for much important legislative work, which will briefly be noticed on a later page. When the Assembly met in Delhi in January 1923, financial affairs loomed very large. It was generally recognised that the great task was that of balancing the budget; but the members hoped that Lord Inchcape would be able so to wield the axe of retrenchment that further taxation would be unnecessary. Although there was no lack of incisiveness about the Retrenchment Committee's proposals, this optimism was not entirely justified. The steps taken to balance the Budget, although including drastic proposals for reduction of expenditure, also took the shape of additional taxation in the form of a doubled salt duty, which had in the previous year been rejected by the Assembly. The House refused by 59 votes to 44 to accept the doubled duty, which after being passed by a non-official majority in the Council of State,

The Salt Tax Dispute.

was thereupon brought into operation by the process of certification. Bitter feeling was aroused among the non-official members, who were inclined to regard the action of Government both as ungrateful to those who had borne the burden of working the reforms, and as giving the party of cooperators scant assistance in the task of meeting their electorates. This incident cast a gloom over the conclusion of the session, which for the rest included notable achievements from the point of view of Indian opinion. The Commander-in-Chief announced that Government had decided upon the Indianisation of the commissioned ranks of eight regiments; the principle of fiscal protection to be applied with discrimination was accepted by the authorities, and a tariff board was appointed for one year in the first instance to make the necessary investigations. The Assembly also secured a victory by the announcement that Government would take under State management two railways whose contracts were about to expire. Resolutions were also carried urging the appointment of Indians in increasing numbers to high offices in the Secretariat of the Government of India; and the fixing of a reasonable proportion of Indians in the cadre of traffic inspectors on Indian State Railways. The attitude of the House towards Indianisation was further exemplified by their manifestations of disapproval at the announcement of the decision to appoint the Lee Committee on the Public Services.

When the third and last session of the Assembly was resumed at Simla, the feeling between the Legislature and the executive had not entirely disappeared. A resolution was adopted by a narrow majority recommending the curtailment of the special powers under which the Viceroy had acted in certifying the Finance Bill. A resolution for the shortening of the period of probation under the Reform Act was also carried against Government. Serious discontent was manifested against the Kenya decision; and a bill was rushed through the Assembly, despite the warning and opposition of Government, regulating the entry into British India of persons domiciled in British possessions outside the United Kingdom. On the other hand the attitude of the Government towards non-cooperation received further endorsement; a resolution calling for the release of Mr. Gandhi, and other political prisoners being defeated by a considerable majority.

Legislative Achievements.

The Legislative work achieved by the first reformed Assembly includes such important social measures as the new Factories Act, the new Mines Act, the Workmen's Compensation Act, the Traffic in Women and

Children Act, the Married Women's Property Act, and the Civil Marriage Act. In the more technical sphere of legislation, reference must be made to the massive "Code of Criminal Procedure Amendment Act," which contained 159 clauses, affecting parts of most of those chapters of the Code which intimately concern the life of the people. Equally striking were the Acts to repeal both the press legislation, and certain "repressive" laws. The Criminal Law Amendment Act, as we have already seen, has largely removed the distinctions on racial grounds, hitherto obtaining in the administration of the criminal law. In view of these achievements alone, it is difficult seriously to suggest that the first reformed Assembly can be accused of sterility. Further, in the political sphere, the disappointments involved in the occasional use of powers of certification, have altogether been outweighed by the continuous and effective pressure exerted by the Assembly upon the whole policy of the executive. In the proroguing speech delivered by Lord Reading on the 28th July 1923, the solid achievements of the legislature were strikingly endorsed by the highest authority in the land. In the course of his address Lord Reading remarked :

Lord Reading's Propogation Speech.

"The achievements of the Indian Legislature have been decried. Their position and privileges have been ridiculed ; their motives have been misinterpreted. Their sincerity and patriotism have been attacked. Let history be their judge. I am confident that no difficulty will be found in sweeping aside those travesties of their earnest and constructive labours ; but this is not all. The Assembly itself has been at times despondent. There have been moments in this House when voices have been uplifted, crying on the Reforms as a niggardly gift and a sham. My sympathy at all times is with laudable desires for constitutional advance and longings for a wider horizon ; but when I examine the position the Legislative Assembly has attained, the use it has made of its opportunities, the effect and dignity with which it conducts its debates and the broader aspect of its powers upon the policy of the Government of India, I cannot but feel that the Assembly at times takes far too narrow and restricted a view of its potentialities and real influence ; and I must suspect that sentiment on occasion tends to obscure reason and dims the vision of those solemn promises of the British Government and of the Charter of Indian liberties of which the Government of India Act is the repository. Weigh for a moment the influence and power of the representative element of this House against that of its predecessor, the Imperial Legislative Council.

Compare the realities of its responsibilities with pre-existing conditions. Reflect on the establishment on a firm basis in this House of Parliamentary traditions and on their incalculable effect on the future.

"I do not desire to enter upon a catalogue of the legislative achievements of the Legislature or to enumerate in detail those Resolutions or questions or recall those debates which have produced material results on the executive action of the Government. I prefer to recapture for a moment the atmosphere and the state of political feeling in India when I assumed my office and to ask you to judge how far this has changed and how far your influence and action have contributed to this change. When I first came to India I was at pains to get into touch with political thought, to hear grievances and study the Press so that I might acquaint myself with those matters which appeared to be a subject of general complaint. My impression of the burning questions of the day in Indian opinion as gathered from those sources was as follows. In the first place, there was a deep tide of resentment regarding curtailment of liberties. The more progressive considered the statutory restrictions on the freedom of the Press to be unnecessary, unduly restrictive and incompatible with the spirit of reforms. The same exception was taken to a number of special enactments restrictive of certain aspects of political agitation and known as the Repressive Laws, and particularly included the Rowlatt Act. Strong views were expressed to me as regards the number of British troops employed in India, the strength of the Indian Army and the burden of military expenditure. The military position was represented as showing a total want of confidence in India and as strangling the material expansion of the country by weight of army expenditure. Though Indianisation had begun in the Civil Services, the absence of any regular scheme of Indianisation of the Army was quoted as a proof of the mistrust of Indians by the British element and as designed effectually to prevent the ultimate realisation of responsible self-government in India. A like suspicion was alleged to be at the root of the failure to associate elected representatives of the people in advisory capacities with the problems coming before the Departments of the Executive Government.

"India was represented as dominated in fiscal matters by the British Government and by the economic interests of Great Britain. The stores policy of India was said to be dictated to stifle the expansion of industry in India, and accusations were levelled that its main purpose was to place the maximum amount of orders with British manufacturers. Finally, the bureaucratic Government were charged with

having established for the perfection of their own ends an unduly complex and expensive administrative machine and with having expanded its activities in directions not desired by the Indian public and out of proportion to India's resources.

"I need hardly recall to you how the case now stands in regard to those subjects. For I know that you count the measures, which have been adopted by my Government on the strength of your representation of public opinion in those matters, among the most priceless pages in your annals; you may perhaps feel that the policies you advocated are not yet in all cases fully accepted, but when you leave this House you may assuredly point to many grievances, which were the cause of much bitterness and suspicion, checked by you in their early growth and now lying strangled on the open road you have left behind you.

"These achievements arrest immediate attention; but there are other matters to be mentioned, particularly as they relate to activities of a more constructive character which will, I trust and believe, have an important and beneficial effect upon the future interests of India. In the Indian Factories Amendment Acts, the Indian Mines Act and the Workmen's Compensation Act, the Legislature has placed on the Statute-book measures destined to protect labour and has taken a progressive view of that great responsibility which rests on its shoulders as the representative of a vast labouring population. The Indian Emigration Act deals with the difficult problem of safeguarding the interests of Indians who may emigrate to find a livelihood abroad; and a striking feature of this legislation is that the final decision of measures for their protection has been vested in the Legislature itself. No measure before you was hedged about with such special difficulties as the law to abolish racial distinctions; but no rift occurred in the delicate web of compromise and good-will; and the Statute is now with us—a permanent monument of mutual desire to work together to a common understanding. In the Criminal Procedure Amendment Act the Legislature brought to a successful conclusion a task of great magnitude and complexity which had occupied the energies of our draftsmen for nearly a decade. It will fall to few Legislatures to have to dispose of a measure of such difficulty and importance in the domain of the criminal law.

"While at times sentiment has run high and some event has found the Assembly and the Executive Government apparently at opposite poles, these differences have seldom been perpetuated and friendly

and frank discussions have frequently led in the end to better understanding.

" Some differences unfortunately have remained. It was perhaps scarcely to be expected that at the present stage of the constitution every divergence of opinion between the Government and the Legislative Assembly would be composed by discussion. Often my Government has accepted the views of the Legislature notwithstanding that these did not coincide with those of the Executive. But a special responsibility has been laid by the constitution upon the Governor General in certain cases and in my judgment special powers are essential to the discharge of the duties of the Executive in the present state of constitutional development in India. Nevertheless the occasions of the use of these special powers should be and, I am happy to observe, have been rare. The most recent and notable instance of their exercise was in connection with the necessity for balancing the budget. The reasons for the action which I felt it incumbent upon me to take at that time have been published. My action provoked criticisms ; I have no intention of reopening the discussion save that I will add that in my opinion subsequent events have tended to confirm the wisdom of my original decision. The responsibility was grave and the decision rested with me alone. I trust that those in the Assembly who have felt and expressed themselves strongly on the subject will leave this House without any feeling of bitterness, holding to their opinion as their consciences may dictate and acknowledging the same liberty to others who may differ from them, among whom I count myself.

" My Government have to acknowledge a continuous and solid measure of support in times of disturbance and agitation from the Legislature, and in general a steady influence exerted for the maintenance of law and order. I have said enough, I trust, to establish beyond controversy the real advance accomplished and to place beyond the power of depreciation the disciplined efforts to increase the well-being of the people of India which have characterised this, the first Indian Legislature."

CHAPTER III.

The Economics of Administration.

General Conditions of India's Finances.

While from the financial standpoint, India occupies a more fortunate position than that which has characterised the majority of other countries since the War, she has not been entirely exempt from the general dislocation. Recently she has passed through five years of unbalanced budgets. But a supreme and successful effort was made by her Government to secure financial equilibrium; with the result that she now only awaits an improvement in International trade conditions to embark upon an era of commercial and industrial expansion.

External Aspects.

By way of introduction we may summarise briefly certain general conditions which regulate the finances of the country. Taking first the external aspect, it should be noticed that India has large commitments in London, in payment for which a sum of from £25,000,000 to £30,000,000 sterling is annually required. The major portion of this sum is represented by interest on the capital which India has borrowed for the purpose of internal development. Another item is payment for Government stores which cannot be obtained in India. This head is destined gradually to disappear as the industrial development of the country progresses and strenuous efforts have for some time been made to reduce it. Next come the payments made to England for the leave allowances of Government servants, and for their pensions after they have retired. Formerly there was a fourth item in the payment made by India to England, representing the cost of maintenance of the India Office. But as a result of the changed relations between the two countries, consequent on the declaration of August 20, 1917, a portion of the expense of the India Office is now borne by the British Exchequer. In substitution for this comes the cost of maintaining the High Commissioner for India, who now discharges functions in England similar to those of the High Commissioners representing the Self Governing Dominions.

Internal Aspects.

We may now turn to the internal aspect of India's finances. In the first place it is to be noticed that a large proportion of the resources of Government is derived from such items as land revenue, customs, opium, railways, forests

and irrigation. Taxation in the ordinary sense of the word bulks far less largely in her budget than in the finances of other countries. Since India is still in the main agricultural, her revenue is predominantly influenced by the character of the season—a fact which accounts for many of the difficulties, financial and otherwise, through which she has passed in recent years. In the second place we may briefly note the system of financial organization. As in the case of general administration, so also in the case of the economic structure, centralisation was for long the watch-word. All revenues went into the coffers of the Government of India, whose orders were necessary for any expenditure of a serious kind. Out of this system was evolved in course of time the plan of "divided heads." The budget of the Government of India still included the transactions of the local Governments, but the revenues enjoyed by the latter were mainly derived from sources of income which they shared with the Central Government. With the introduction of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, this state of affairs passed away. A complete separation was introduced between the finances of the Central Government and those of the Provincial Administrations. No head of revenue was henceforth to be divided; land revenue, irrigation, excise and judicial stamps were to be provincialised; while income tax and general stamps were to become central heads of revenue. Inasmuch as under this arrangement the Government of India's resources would be substantially curtailed, it was proposed that the deficit should be made good by contribution from the Provinces. In January 1920 a committee appointed to investigate the future financial relations between the local and central authorities proposed that in 1921-22 the Provincial Governments should contribute Rs. 983 lakhs (£6,500,000) to the Government of India. The recommendations of the committee were revised and to some extent altered by the Joint Select Committee of Both Houses of Parliament; it being finally settled that from the year 1921-22 a total contribution of Rs. 983 lakhs, or such smaller sum as may be determined by the Governor-General-in-Council, shall be paid by the local Governments. Provision was made for reduction when the Governor-General-in-Council fixed as the total amount of the contribution a sum smaller than that payable in the preceding year. Unfortunately, since this separation between central and provincial finances, both central and local administrations have undergone a period of financial distress. Expenditure has necessarily been on the up grade, partly

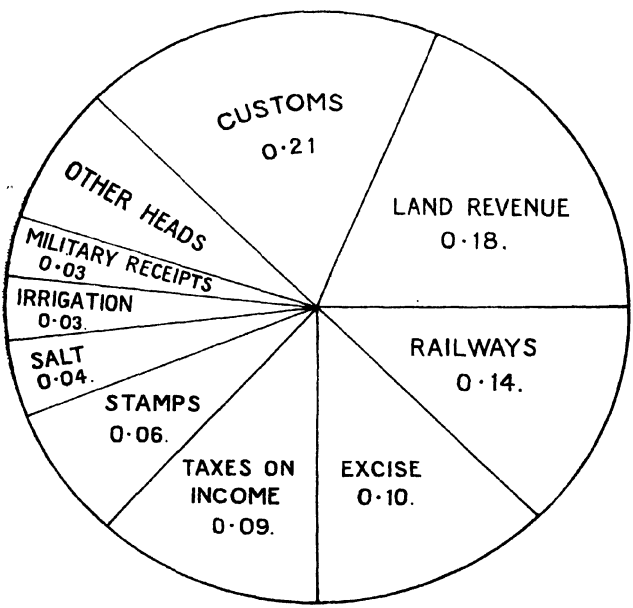
Centralisation and Devolution.

Provincial Contributions.

DIAGRAM 3.

How each Rupee of Revenue was made up in India 1922-23.

(Provincial and Central Together).



The Rupee of Revenue 1922-23.

[The basis of reckoning is the same as that on which the accounts and estimates are prepared; working expenses of the Railway, Irrigation, Posts and Telegraphs Departments, refunds and the like being deducted from revenue and not treated as expenditure.]

owing to rising prices, and partly owing to the increased cost which naturally attends the popularisation of a bureaucratic Government. The hope that the resources of the Provinces, increased as a result of the new financial settlement, would assist them in finding money for large schemes of economic and social development, has not been realised up to the time of writing. This handicap has seriously threatened the success of the Reforms; since the ministers in charge of "nation-building" subjects have not been able to effect those changes in the departments under their control which public opinion eagerly and insistently demands. Somewhat naturally, there has grown up in all provinces a strong feeling against the system of contributions to the Central Government. Certain provincial administrations, indeed, protested emphatically that they were utterly unable to balance their budget under the protected arrangement; and it was actually found necessary in 1921 to remit the Bengal contribution for a period of three years. The case of Bengal was somewhat exceptional, for it had been recommended to the special consideration of the Government of India by the Select Committee. But the concession naturally led to similar demands from the other provinces. Since however the finances of the Central Government were such as to make a reduction of Provincial subventions utterly unthinkable, it was found impossible to give further relief. In 1922-23 the position of the provincial Governments was serious. Only two out of the nine were working to a surplus; and the aggregate deficit of the remainder amounted to a difference of 352 lakhs (£2⅛ millions) between current revenue and expenditure. The Government of India made it clear that unless a marked revival in trade should occur, no reduction of the provincial contributions would be possible in the immediate future. The feeling that the provincial Governments could expect no help from the Government of India went far to stimulate their efforts to achieve financial stability; and during 1922-23 most of them proceeded to examine all possible avenues of retrenchment and at the same time sought the sanction of their Legislative Councils for new taxation. As a result of their efforts, the financial position of the provinces in 1923-24 has become far more satisfactory. The era of unbalanced budgets has almost everywhere disappeared, save in the Punjab, where the financial position has of late been deteriorating. The gap separating revenue and expenditure in the majority of provincial budgets is now very small; and as the processes of retrenchment of expenditure and enhancement of revenue are being pursued side by side, it will, we may confidently

Provincial Difficulties.

hope, in no short space of time disappear entirely. But the Government of India fully realise the serious burden which is placed upon the provincial Governments by the system of contributions to the Central Exchequer. They have placed in the very forefront of their financial policy the necessity of leaving the provinces free to undertake those large projects of social and industrial development upon which the success of the Reform scheme so largely depends. In November 1923 there was held for the second time a conference between the financial authorities of the provincial and the Central Governments. Among the most important of the resolutions unanimously accepted was that calling for the appointment of an expert committee on taxation; which should examine the manner in which the burden was at present distributed between different classes of the population; should consider the whole scheme of taxation—central, provincial and local—with a view to its improvement; should report on the suitability of new sources of taxation; should advise on the machinery required for the collection of taxes; and should in general survey the whole field of State impositions upon the subject, with the exception, to some extent, of land revenue. Among other important topics discussed at the Conference, mention may be made of the improvement of arrangements for provincial borrowing, and the establishment of a Provincial Loans' Fund; the adoption of general principles in regard to excise, so as to avoid conflicts of provincial interests; the methods of determining the share of the provincial Governments in revenue from unified stamps; and the assignments to be made to them in respect to recent increases in stamp-duty.

Central Policy regarding the Provinces.

Proposed Taxation Committee.

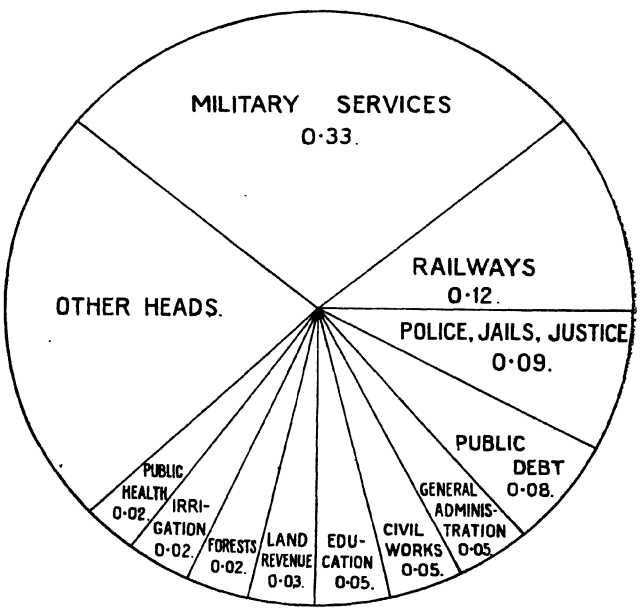
We must now briefly examine the financial position of the Central Government. Until five years ago, the accounts of the Government of India had for the previous quarter of a century consistently revealed great financial strength. With the exception of one or two abnormal years, there were generally surpluses on the revenue side, which led to the division of large sums among the provinces for expenditure on education, sanitation and other agencies. Substantial amounts were moreover set aside from the revenues for productive purposes, and State borrowings were kept at a low figure. But in 1918-19 an unfortunate change came over the situation. There was a deficit of Rs. 6 crores (£4,000,000). This was left uncovered. Next year, mainly owing

Finances of the Central Government.

DIAGRAM 4.

How each Rupee of Expenditure was made up in India 1922-23.

(Provincial and Central Together).



The Rupee of Expenditure 1922-23.

[For the basis of reckoning *vide* footnote to Diagram No. 3.]

to the unforeseen expenditure caused by the Afghan War, the deficit amounted to Rs. 24 crores (£16,000,000). The final accounts for 1920-21, swollen by the adjustments of various items, revealed a deficit of Rs. 26 crores (£17⅓ millions). When the budget of 1921-22 was presented to the new Central Legislature, it was found that there was an anticipated deficit of more than Rs. 18 crores (£12,000,000). The proposals of Government for new taxation were accepted with few modifications by the Assembly. The changes were mostly under customs; and it was hoped that the year's revenue would thereby be assisted to a small surplus. Unfortunately the succeeding twelve months proved a period of most disastrous trade depression, which in combination with other adverse forces reduced the estimated revenue by Rs. 20 crores (£13⅓ millions). The effects of the reduction were aggravated by an increase of expenditure; with the consequence that the revised estimates disclosed a deficit of Rs. 33 crores (£22,000,000). In these circumstances, Government decided to budget for a deficit in 1922-23, proposing to find Rs. 29 crores (£19⅓ millions), and to leave the remainder uncovered. The Legislative Assembly became seriously perturbed and emphatically demanded thorough-going retrenchment. It insisted upon a general five per cent cut in the expenditure of all civil departments. On the taxation side it rejected a proposed increase in the duty on imported piecegoods, and in the cotton excise. It also refused a proposed increase of the salt tax from Re. 1-4 to Rs. 2-8 per maund of 82 lbs. The effect of these changes was to increase the estimated deficit from Rs. 3 crores to Rs. 9 crores.

Five Disastrous years.

The Government of India embarked with vigour upon the process of retrenchment. During 1922 every Department radically overhauled its commitments with the idea of curtailing unnecessary expenditure. More important still, a strong committee presided over by Lord Inchcape devoted more than two months in the winter of 1922-23 to a minute and searching scrutiny of the expenditure of every department of Government. They recommended retrenchment to the extent of Rs. 19¼ crores (£12¾ millions) in the expenditure of the Government of India. The largest item of economy proposed was on the military side, where the reduction amounted to nearly Rs. 10½ crores, (£7,000,000). In railways, economies amounting to Rs. 4½ crores (£3,000,000) were suggested. In posts and telegraphs, there was suggested a reduction of Rs. 1·3 crores (£866,000), exclusive of a reduction of Rs. 50 lakhs (£333,000) in the capital expenditure of the Telegraph Department. Under the

Retrenchment.

head of general administration, the Committee proposed a reduction of Rs. 50 lakhs (£333,000) towards which every department of the Government of India found itself obliged to contribute by drastic economies.

Effects in 1923-24.

It was of course impossible, as the Retrenchment Committee themselves clearly realised, that the full value of the proposed reductions could be obtained in the first year of their operation. None-the-less, by strenuous efforts, Government succeeded in including the major portion of the proposals in their 1923-24 budget. In the non-military portion of expenditure, an immediate reduction of Rs. 6·6 crores (£4$\frac{2}{5}$ millions) was made as against the Inchcape Committee's ultimate suggestion of Rs. 8 crores (£5$\frac{1}{3}$ millions). In the case of military expenditure, the total for which the Assembly was asked to provide funds in 1923-24 was Rs. 62 crores (£41$\frac{1}{3}$ millions), which represented economies to the amount of Rs. 5·75 crores (£3$\frac{4}{5}$ millions). The total effect of these and certain other reductions may be summarised in the statement that as compared with the original budget estimates of expenditure for 1922-23 of Rs. 215·27 crores (£143$\frac{1}{2}$ millions), inclusive of the working expenditures of the commercial departments, the total expenditure of the Government of India in 1923-24, taking sterling expenditure at the rate of exchange of 1*s.* 4*d.* per rupee, was now estimated at Rs. 204·37 crores (£136$\frac{1}{4}$ millions), in spite of an increase of Rs. 1·75 crores (£1$\frac{1}{6}$ million) for interest. Unfortunately even reductions so large were not estimated as sufficient to balance the revenue and expenditure during 1923-24. As against an estimated expenditure of Rs. 204·37 crores (£136$\frac{1}{4}$ millions), there was an expected revenue of Rs. 195·2 crores (£132$\frac{1}{3}$ millions). As we mentioned in last year's Statement, the Assembly, despite the cogent arguments adduced by the Finance Member, was deterred through considerations not primarily economic, from consenting to the enhancement of the Salt Tax which would have bridged the gulf between revenue and expenditure. Since Government considered that the possibilities of retrenchment had been taken fully into consideration, and that the balancing of India's budget could not be further delayed without damage to her credit, the Viceroy certified the enhancement of the Salt Tax until March 31, 1924. With the political effect of this action, we are not at the moment concerned; it suffices in this place to notice that after five years of deficit the Government of India had at last achieved a balanced budget. The financial effect of their success was apparent in the course of the succeeding twelve

The Budget Balanced.

months. There was no longer any fear of their being forced to undesirable expedients, such as currency inflation, in order to meet their outgoings. The improved position was happily reflected in the enhanced market price of rupee securities. On the 15th February 1923, the five per cent tax-free loan 1945-55 was quoted at Rs. 88·10. A year later it was quoted at Rs. 98. During this same period, the quotation for the five per cent loan 1929-47 rose from Rs. 82·10 to Rs. 93·2. Further, the quotation for 3½% rupee paper rose from its lowest point of Rs. 52 to a maximum figure of Rs. 66-10; while in 1923, as will be made plain in a subsequent paragraph, the Government of India were able for the first time since 1919 to raise money by a long term issue.

Financial Results.

We may now briefly recount the financial history of the year 1923-24. Trade showed a steady revival. During the first ten months of the financial year, the surplus in value of exports in merchandise amounted to Rs. 103·47 crores as against Rs. 62¾ crores in the corresponding period of the previous year. After allowing for imports of bullion, there remained a net balance of Rs. 63·42 crores in favour of India, as against Rs. 20½ crores a year ago. The volume of India's export trade continued to expand. The chief increase was under the head of grain and pulse, where in the first nine months of 1923-24 it amounted to 600,000 tons. But with scarcely any exception, every class of goods showed some increase. In imports also there was a serious decline only in a few cases. The imports of coal fell by exactly a third, or by 284,000 tons in the first nine months of the current year, when compared with the corresponding period of 1922-23. Gray twist and yarn and gray piece goods also declined, but the quantity of practically every other class of imports increased. Prices of Indian products on the whole remained remarkably steady throughout the year, with the exception of raw cotton, which had been subject to considerable fluctuations on account of the uncertainty, and eventual shortage, of the American supply. Food grains, on the other hand fell steadily after April 1923; and the wholesale price of cereals in Calcutta in December of that year was only 5% above the level of July 1914 Sugar showed a tendency to advance, while tea obtained record prices. In general, it may be said that the close of 1923 was characterised by somewhat firmer prices for Indian raw material in the chief markets of the world; and there was a greater sense of security among producers and merchants than could be claimed for the end of the year 1922.

History of 1923-24.

The effect of these conditions upon the budget of the Government of India was elucidated in the speech delivered by the Finance Member, Sir Basil Blackett, on February 29th, 1924.

Effects upon the Revenue of 1923-24.

The slow recovery of trade and the fall in prices of imported articles, led once more to disappointment in customs receipts. As compared with the budget estimate of Rs. 45·1 crores, the actual figures for customs receipts up to the end of January pointed to a net revenue for the year of Rs. 40·42 crores. Sugar provided Rs. 115 lakhs less revenue than had been anticipated; and while the volume of imports of other articles was in most cases not unsatisfactory, the amount collected on account of *ad valorem* duty declined. But one important item in the failure of customs revenue to fulfil anticipations was due to a recent decision of the Bombay High Court that stores imported by railway companies working state lines come under the definition of "Government stores" and ought thus to be passed free of duty. Against this judgment an appeal has been referred to the Privy Council. If the appeal succeeds, the Government of India expect to recover Rs. 50 lakhs from the company-managed railways, which will go to the revenue side of the Budget of 1923-24. If the appeal fails, the Government of India will have to pay to the railway companies a further sum estimated at about Rs. 2 crores by way of refund of duty collected from them after the definition of Government stores, which had hitherto been accepted, was brought into question before the Courts. In railways, on the other hand, there was an improvement anticipated to amount to Rs. 58 lakhs on the net receipts. During the earlier part of the financial year, the published figures of weekly earnings were unsatisfactory, being also considerably affected during the monsoon and again in December by breaches in important lines due to flood and storm. Since the middle of December, however, there was a certain improvement in gross receipts, which brought the estimate for the whole year to the figure of Rs. 94·22 crores. This was Rs. 1¾ crores less than the budget estimate; but the deficit was overborne by a total saving in working expenses amounting to Rs. 1·93 crores. Under the heads of interest, currency and miscellaneous the year 1923-24 showed an improvement of Rs. 1·42 lakhs over the budget estimate. This was largely due to the higher price for short money in London; as well as to the fact that favourable opportunities for remittance enabled the Government of India to build up large reserves in sterling. In salt,

Customs.

Railways.

Interest, etc.

the results of the enhanced taxation proved disappointing. The budget provided for a total salt revenue of Rs. 11¾ crores, in which were included the additional Rs. 4½ crores, anticipated from the doubling of the duty. But during January and February 1923 very large issues of salt had been called for in anticipation of the enhancement; while the hopes of profiting by a reduction of the duty in 1924-25 led the dealers, especially in northern India, to reduce their stocks as far as possible. An examination of past statistics show that the issue against consumption in a normal year would at the present time amount approximately to 495 lakhs of maunds. But the actual issues for 1923-24 were expected to amount only to about 380 lakhs of maunds. It is interesting to notice that Government have been unable to find any evidence that the restricted issues have been accompanied by any reduction in actual consumption. But the financial upshot was that the total revenue from salt in 1923-24 was estimated at Rs. 8¾ crores, which was Rs. 3 crores less than the estimate. Thus on the revenue side, as against the budget estimate of Rs. 134·9 crores it was anticipated that the figures at the end of the year would amount to Rs. 129·52 crores.

Salt.

Fortunately, on the expenditure side the year showed considerable saving. The only important excess of expenditure over the estimate occurred under the head of opium; for which a supplementary grant of Rs. 77 lakhs was voted by the Assembly in the July session to meet payments which arose from an increased out-turn of the last crop. The budget provision for discount on Treasury bills proved to include a substantial saving. On 31st March 1922 the Treasury bills outstanding with the public had reached the formidable total of Rs. 54 crores. On the 31st March 1923 this figure had been reduced to Rs. 22 crores; while on the 31st March 1924 it is hoped that it will amount to only Rs. 2 crores. Further, the favourable rate at which the new rupee loan was issued also resulted in a saving on the budget provision for charges connected with the loans in the current year; but there was a small excess in the provision for sterling loans on account of the Government of India having raised £18,000,000 in London instead of £15,000,000 tentatively entered in the budget statement. On the whole, Government expected a saving of Rs. 74 lakhs in the gross interest charges on debt. Under the head of sinking funds, there was a net saving of Rs. 80 lakhs, since the improved state of Government securities made it unnecessary to utilise any portion of the special pro-

Expenditure 1923-24.

Savings.

vision made during the last two years for supporting the two long term five per cent rupee loans. As against budget estimates of military expenditure amounting to Rs. 65·05 crores gross and Rs. 62 crores net, considerable reductions had been made. Full effect had been given to the reduction of British troops proposed by the Retrenchment Committee except in the case of one cavalry regiment; and while the resulting economies would not fully accrue until 1924-25, the Commander-in-Chief had found it possible to reduce the established charges of the military services in 1923-24 to Rs. 60¼ crores as against the figure of Rs. 61·94 crores, included in the original estimate. There was a gain of three quarters of a crore over the estimated credit for the consumption or disposal of surplus stores. On the other hand, the estimate of special expenditure in Waziristan was about Rs. 2 crores as against the figure of Rs. 1·69 crores included in the budget; while gratuities and payments to demobilised officers were found to cost Rs. 1½ crores as against the Rs. 62 lakhs provided. All these figures included sterling expenditure converted into rupees at 16 pence; and on this basis the revised military estimate stood at Rs. 60·20 crores net. From this total, a sum of Rs. 46 lakhs could be deducted from savings under the head of exchange, making the net figure Rs. 59·74 crores. Under other heads of civil expenditure there was a saving of half a crore; but the largest saving on the expenditure side occurred under exchange. For budget purposes during 1923-24 the figure assumed was 1*s.* 4*d.*; but the average rate for the financial year was expected to work out at approximately 1*s.* 4½*d.* The resulting saving outside India amounted to Rs. 128 lakhs. In addition there was a saving of approximately 50 lakhs in respect to capital expenditure. Hence, as against an estimated expenditure of Rs. 134·09 crores, the figures for the year seem to indicate a revised total of Rs. 129·90 crores. Thus, at the time of the presentation of the budget of 1924-25, there was reason to believe that the year 1923-24 would close with a small deficit of Rs. 38 lakhs. But the figures of revenue and expenditure were so nearly balanced that it would not be surprising to find that the year 1923-24 would actually display a small surplus. Whether this should prove to be the case or not, the position was placed beyond doubt by a valuable windfall. A sum approximating to something like £3¼ millions representing profits from the control of enemy ships, had been credited to the Indian revenues. Out of this sum, the Government of India proposed to reserve Rs. 25 lakhs for the

Military Economies.

Exchange.

A Windfall.

payment of grants to private individuals in consideration of losses suffered through enemy action. The balance gave indications of a surplus of over Rs. 4 crores in the budget of 1923-24. Of this surplus, Rs. 2 crores has been reserved for the payments which will become necessary if the appeal to the Privy Council in the matter of railway stores should fail. The remainder of the surplus is being applied automatically to the reduction or avoidance of new borrowings for capital expenditure.

In forecasting the expenditure for 1924-25 Sir Basil Blackett estimated military expenditure at Rs. 63 crores gross, and Rs. 60·25 crores net.

Budget for 1924-25.

On the basis of 1*s.* 4*d.* to the rupee, the net amount required would be Rs. 60·93 crores; but as after careful consideration the Government of India decided to frame their forecast on the basis of an average rate of exchange of 1*s.* 4$\frac{3}{4}$*d.* they expect a saving on exchange of Rs. 68 lakhs. In order to assist comparison with the year 1923-24 the figures of military expenditure immediately following will be given on the basis of 1*s.* 4*d.* to the rupee. Established charges are estimated at Rs. 59 crores as compared with a revised estimate of Rs. 60$\frac{1}{4}$ crores for 1923-24. The sum of Rs. 30 lakhs is required for roads and barracks in Waziristan and Rs. 163 lakhs for special terminal charges. Excluding a special sum of Rs. 25 lakhs, representing customs duty, which will come back as revenue, the established charges will amount to Rs. 58$\frac{3}{4}$ crores as against the figure of Rs. 59·38 crores assumed by the Retrenchment Committee. On the civil side, effect has now been given to almost all the recommendations of the Retrenchment Committee, and expenditure generally has been kept low. On the assumption that a proposed separation of railway from general finances is approved by the Assembly, so that railway transactions will cease to be a direct charge on Central revenues, the total expenditure for 1924-25 is estimated to amount to Rs. 104·57 crores. In order to meet this expenditure, the estimated revenue was as follows. The Finance Member announced that he expected a net customs revenue of Rs. 45·02 crores. He proposed certain small changes in the tariff, the most important being a reduction of excise duty on motor spirit to 4$\frac{1}{2}$ annas per gallon; and the imposition of specific duties on empty match boxes and splints in order to protect the match revenue. Under the income tax he expected a total of Rs. 18·22 crores, a reduction of Rs. 85 lakhs on the net revenue expected under the current year. He anticipated no material variation in the estimates under other

Military Expenditure.

Revenue.

heads of revenue, except under currency; where the investments in British Treasury bills made out of the large sterling remittances effected in the current year are expected to yield about half a crore increase. On the assumption that the net receipts from railways were replaced by the fixed contribution of Rs. 4·27 crores on the basis of the separation between railway and general finance to which allusion has previously been made, the Finance Member arrived at a total revenue estimate of Rs. 107·93 crores. This gave on the basis of existing taxation a surplus of Rs. 3·36 crores during 1924-25.

The Surplus and its Disposal.

To this surplus, which, as Sir Basil Blackett emphasised, was a real surplus, there were two claimants; the reduction of provincial contributions, and the reduction of the salt tax. He proceeded to point out that if taxation were retained at the existing figure, and the surplus given away in whole or part to the provincial Governments, there would be the hope of another small surplus in 1925-26. But if the salt tax were reduced to Re. 1-4 per maund, there would be an initial deficiency of Rs. 2·16 crores to face in that year. Further, an immediate reduction of the salt tax would enable the dealers to succeed in their plan in retaining for themselves part of what they ought to have paid to Government. Finally, he said, the reduction of the salt tax to the previous figure would proclaim to the Provinces that neither in 1924-25 nor in 1925-26 could the Government of India offer them any certain prospects of relief. But, he announced, since the Government realised that the retention of the salt tax at the current figure was a matter commonly regarded from a wider standpoint than that of pure economics, they had decided not to ask the House to continue the duty at Rs. 2-8 a maund. Their definite recommendation was that out of the surplus of Rs. 3·36 crores a sum of Rs. 1·82 crores should be applied to reducing the salt tax from Rs. 2-8 per maund to Rs. 2 per maund; and that a sum of Rs. 1·50 crores should be applied to a reduction of provincial contributions. This would give immediate relief to four provinces reducing the contribution of Madras from Rs. 348 lakhs to Rs. 268 lakhs; that of the Punjab from Rs. 175 lakhs to Rs. 137 lakhs; that of the United Provinces from 240 lakhs to 210 lakhs; that of Burma from 64 lakhs to 62 lakhs.

Attitude of the Assembly.

As will be pointed out in greater detail in the fifth chapter of this Statement, the Assembly did not deal with the budget in the manner which was generally expected. They used the opportunity afforded by its presentation to

register a political protest; and refused to consider its detailed provisions upon their financial merits. On the first day of demands for grants, the Nationalist Party, which commanded a small but adequate majority in the House, threw out the first four items, including the two pivotal heads of Customs and Income Tax. They further refused to permit the introduction of the Finance Bill, again registering their protest on considerations of general policy rather than on any estimate of the merits of the measure before them. In consequence, Lord Reading found himself obliged to certify the Finance Bill in the minimum form which the responsibilities vested in him dictated. The Salt Tax was reduced to Re. 1-4 per maund; and with the exception of the imposition of duty on empty match boxes and splints, the other changes in the tariff which had been proposed in the draft Finance Bill were dropped. The result of the Assembly's action from the purely financial point of view was described by the Finance Member as a message of despair to all who are looking to expenditure, whether by the Central Government or by the provincial Governments, for the amelioration of conditions of life, and for improved educational and sanitary services throughout India.

The Debt Position.

Whatever may have been the political reasons which urged the Assembly thus to deal with the Budget, it is perhaps unfortunate that the favourable financial position which the Government of India has now attained, should not have received its meed of appreciation from the popular representatives. During the year 1923-24, the debt position has been overhauled, and systematic proposals have been formulated for its extinction. The total debt of India on March 31st, 1924, amounted to Rs. 905·65 crores. Of this, Rs. 578·39 crores are classed as productive debt, and Rs. 228·45 crores as unproductive debt. The balance of Rs. 98·81 crores represents debt incurred on behalf of provincial Governments. Of the unproductive debt, approximately Rs. 98 crores represent the accumulated deficits for the five years ending March 31st, 1923. The building of New Delhi accounts for Rs. 9·85 crores. The remainder, which is Rs. 120·60 crores, may be said to be India's true War Debt. The Finance Member suggested in his Budget speech, that it is reasonable to fix different period for the redemption of different classes of debt. For productive debt, 80 years, in his opinion, is not too long; for unproductive debt, a period of more than 50 years is scarcely defensible. Taking the periods named, and applying them to India's different classes of debt, and assuming further that the sums provided year by year are set aside to accumulate at 5 per cent compound interest, it is found that the figure of

Rs. 3·66 crores is the amount which must be provided annually, beginning with the year 1924-25, to redeem the whole debt within the assigned terms of years. But the operation of this process during the next five years can be achieved more simply by an annual provision of Rs. 4·04 crores. It would, the Finance Member suggested, be desirable to arrive in the near future at a definite—perhaps statutory—programme for dealing with the redemption of the debt.

Loans.

Mention was made in last year's Statement of the success of the 1922 rupee loan, which consisted of two series, five year 6 per cent bonds, 1927, free of income tax; and ten year 6 per cent bonds, 1932, also free of income tax. The total amount realised was nearly Rs. 47 crores. Both in June 1922, and October 1922, loans were floated in London. In the first month, a loan for the nominal amount of £12½ millions sterling, bearing 5½% interest, and repayable at par in January 1932 was issued at 96, the amount being quickly subscribed. In October 1922, a long term loan to the nominal amount of £20 millions, bearing interest at 4½% was issued at 85. The terms of the loan provided that if not previously redeemed, the stock will be repaid at par in May 1955; but the Secretary of State for India reserved to himself the right of giving three calendar months notice to redeem the loan at par on any half-yearly interest date after May 1950. During the year 1923 the improved position of the Government of India's finances was reflected in the more favourable terms at which borrowing was undertaken. In India a rupee loan for 24 crores was raised first in the form of ten year 5% bonds 1933; and secondly of a five per cent loan 1945-55, both free of income tax. This was the first time since 1920 that money had been raised in India by a long term issue. In London also a sterling loan for £20 millions, bearing interest at 4½% was raised, the issuing price being on this occasion 90. The terms of repayment were similar to those of the previous year.

The Banking System.

In previous Statements mention has been made of the desirability, from the point of view of the development of Indian trade, of extending the banking facilities with which the country is at present so meagrely provided. Of late years, there have been steady improvements in the desired direction. The pre-war year 1913 showed 12 exchange banks doing business in India. In 1922, the number had risen to 18. Before the War, the aggregate capital and reserves amounted to £37 millions; while in 1922 the figure stood at over £112 millions. Indian joint stock banks, with a paid up capital and reserve of rupees five lakhs and over have increased

from 18 in 1913 to 27 in 1921; while the smaller banks with a paid up capital and reserves of between one lakh and five lakhs have increased from 23 in 1913 to 41 at the present time. The three Presidency banks which had for long played an honourable part in the financial history of India, have since January 1921 been amalgamated into the Imperial Bank of India. Under the Imperial Bank of India Act, the nominal capital of the bank was trebled, the total capital of the three Presidency banks being Rs. 3¾ crores, and the authorised capital of the Imperial Bank of India being Rs. 11¼ crores. The general superintendence of the affairs and business of the bank is vested in a Central Board of Governors, while local affairs are controlled by Local Boards at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. The presidents, vice-presidents and secretaries of these Local Boards are on the Central Board, upon which the Governor General in Council is empowered to nominate four non-officials. The Board is completed by two Managing Governors, and the Controller of the Currency, and such other officer of Government as may be nominated by the Governor General. By agreement, the general banking business of Government is conducted by the bank, which holds Treasury balances, wherever it has branches. The bank has further undertaken to open one hundred new branches within five years, the location of one in every four being at the absolute discretion of Government. There are also certain powers vested in the Governor General in Council to issue instructions to the bank in respect of any matter which in his opinion is likely to affect his financial policy, or the safety of the Government balances. Perhaps the greatest innovation is the constitution of a London Office; and with effect from the 28th January 1924, this office has been entrusted with the management of the Government of India rupee securities in London. Up to that time, the Bank of England had been in charge of this work, and had charged £400 per crore of rupees, subject to a minimum of £8,000 per annum. The Imperial Bank, on the other hand, charges £300 per crore of rupees, subject to a minimum of £5,000 per annum, with the additional proviso that in the event of the debt on which the charge is assessed falling in any year below 8 crores of rupees the minimum charge shall be reduced to £4,000 per annum. A further exemplification of the tendency on the part of India to manage the details of her own financial system, is provided by the arrangements now in hand for the printing of stamps in the country, instead of purchasing them on payment from England. An investigation has lately been conducted into the possibility of security

The Imperial Bank.

printing in India, as a result of which currency notes will eventually be manufactured locally.

India and Investment.

That the number of banks at present existing in India is inadequate for her needs, is clear from the fact that there are at present only some hundred head offices with between 300 and 400 branch banks throughout the whole country. Roughly 75% of the total towns in India with a population of 10,000 and over have no banks; while in some 20% of the 75 towns which possess a population of more than 50,000 inhabitants the same condition prevails. Probably this situation is to be ascribed to the fact that the habit of investment is comparatively undeveloped in India, its place being taken by hoarding, and by the conversion of bullion into jewelry. If only investment could become a general practice, the capital thus released would probably lead to the commencement of an era of unprecedented prosperity. The Administration is fully alive to the necessity of increasing banking facilities throughout the country at large and, as we have noticed, the Imperial Bank scheme includes the project of the opening of a hundred new branches within five years. One very hopeful line of progress is represented by the increased popularity of Post Office Cash Certificates. Originally issued in 1917, these certificates were taken by the small investor, thanks to a vigorous campaign for saving, to total of Rs. 8 crores net during the period ending March 31, 1919. From that time onwards repayments considerably exceeded new purchases year by year; and on the 31st March 1923, the total outstandings had been reduced to Rs. 3 crores. But the year 1923-24 witnessed a very promising development. From the 1st April 1923, the terms on which Post Office Certificates were issued were improved to offer a net yield of 6% compound interest to those who hold them till maturity. Strenuous efforts were also made to popularise them, with the result that during the 10 months ending 31st January 1924, a total of Rs. 6 crores gross and Rs. 4½ crores net (after allowing for repayment) was invested. It should be possible by the development of this system to finance a considerable portion of provincial capital expenditure; and the stimulus both to thrift and industry resulting therefrom might well change the whole economic position of India in the course of a few decades.

Post Office Cash Certificates.

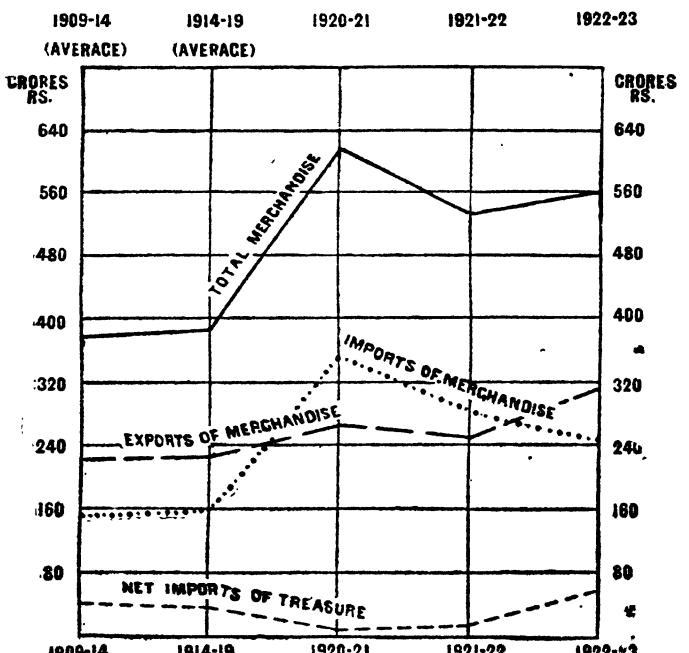
In sketching the financial situation of India, we have already described in summary form the general economic characteristics of the year 1922-23. For the sake of completeness we may now proceed briefly to analyse the trade re-

Trade in 1922-23.

DIAGRAM 5.

The Foreign Sea-borne Trade of British India.

(PRIVATE AND GOVERNMENT.)



turns both of the financial year and of the remaining period with which this Statement is concerned. In general, it is to be noticed that during 1922-23 stagnation, following readjustment after the post-war boom, still remained the keynote of the import trade. On the export side, Indian conditions favoured a strong revival. The rains were ample and well distributed, good harvests being reaped in practically all parts of the country. The price of staple food-grains fell considerably, and the exportable surplus became appreciable. But the prospects of marked improvement in Indian trade are bound up with the improvement of purchasing power in Europe; and during the period now in review, her overseas customers were only in a position to provide a moderate response. There were however distinct signs of advance over the preceding year; most European countries showing steady progress in practically all branches of commercial and industrial activity. But in the first quarter of 1923 the occupation of the Ruhr introduced a factor of uncertainty and difficulty, which very soon led to marked stagnation and arrested the general improvement in trade. India's three best individual customers are the United Kingdom, Japan, and the United States of America. Hence from the exchange point of view, she is particularly interested in the movements of the level of wholesale prices in these countries. Those levels remained remarkably constant during the major portion of 1922-23. An interesting feature of India's trade at this period is the fact that the decrease in the recorded value of imports was primarily due to lower prices; while the improvement in the value of exports was a a genuine increase, since the level of export prices remained steady. On the import side, cotton piece goods were an important exception to the general downward trend. The quantity imported increased by 500 million yards to 1,600 million yards; and the value by Rs. 15 crores to Rs. 58 crores. But after deducting this item, the total imports declined in value by 22% from Rs. 223 crores to Rs. 174 crores. Imports of wheat and of sugar were considerably reduced; and the value of imported machinery and mill work, railway plant and rolling stock, owing largely to lower prices, also decreased. On the export side, raw jute increased owing to the increased demand from all the principal importing countries. The total value of raw jute and jute manufactures amounted to Rs. 63 crores as compared with Rs. 44 crores in the preceding year. As a result of the removal of the embargo on exports, shipments of rice increased by 700,000 tons in quantity and Rs. 10 crores in value, to over 2,000,000 tons in quantity, and Rs. 35 crores in value. Exports of

General Survey.

wheat increased in quantity by 140,000 tons, and amounted to 220,000 tons valued at Rs. 3½ crores. Raw cotton exports increased in value by Rs. 17 crores. The tea trade continued to flourish, and despite a marked diminution in the volume of exports, their value increased by nearly Rs. 4 crores. The demand for oil-seeds improved strikingly and the total value of the exports rose by Rs. 10 crores to Rs. 27 crores.

We may now proceed to examine in some greater detail the features of the import and export trade of India during 1922-23. Taking first the import trade, we may notice that cotton manufactures are still the most prominent of individual items; the total imports under this head increasing in value in 1922-23 to Rs. 70 crores, as compared with Rs. 57 crores in 1921-22, and Rs. 66 crores in the pre-war year 1913-14. The total quantity of cotton piece goods imported into the country increased by 46 % to 1,600 million yards, the largest increase being in grey goods. Compared with 1921-22, the United Kingdom increased her percentage share of grey goods from 82·8 to 89·5, and of white goods from 97·8 to 98·2. But she lost in coloured goods to Japan, who increased her percentage share under this head from 3·6 in 1921-22 to 6·3 in 1922-23. The United Kingdom still enjoys an immense priority over all other competitors in her percentage share of the total quantity of piece goods imported into India. This percentage amounted to 91·2 in 1922-23, as against 87·6 in 1921-22. All other countries lost some ground. The share of Japan declined from 8·3 in 1921-22 to 6·8 in 1922-23; that of the United States from 2·1 to 0·5, and that of the Netherlands from 1·1 to 0·8.

India's Imports.

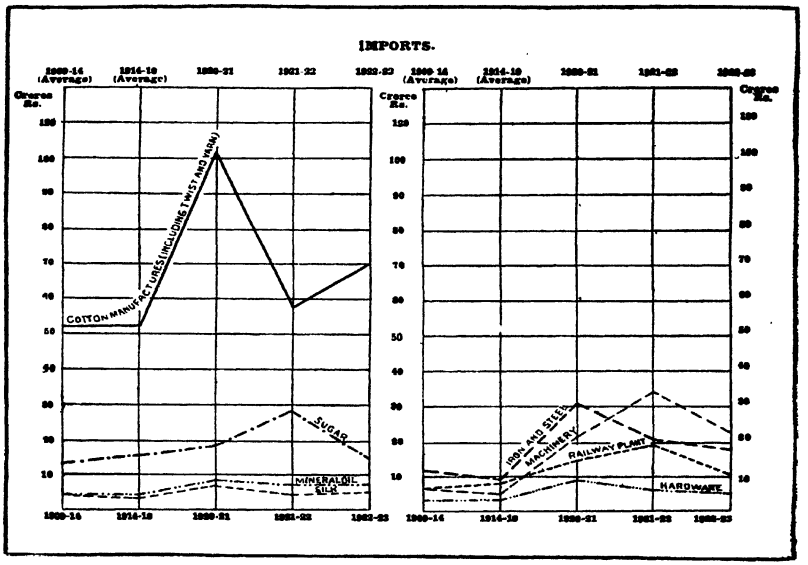
1. Cotton manufactures.

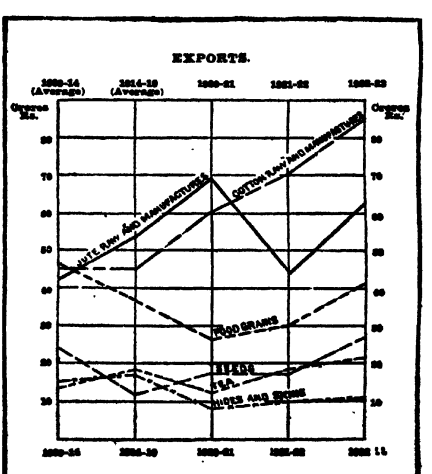
As in the previous year, the head machinery and mill work ranked next in importance to that of cotton manufactures. The total value of the imports of machinery of all kinds decreased from Rs. 35 crores in 1921-22 to Rs. 24 crores, a fact largely ascribable to lower manufacturing costs. The heaviest decreases were shown in jute mill machinery and boilers. The value of cotton machinery imported showed an increase under the head of cotton spinning machinery. The value of electrical machinery also fell. Under this head again, the United Kingdom enjoys a considerable priority, her share being 84·6 per cent. Her nearest competitor is the United States; whose share during the year under review declined from 13·2% to 9·6%.

2. Machinery and Mill Work.

DIAGRAM 6.

Variations in the values of principal articles in the Import and Export Trade of British India during the last three years as compared with averages of the pre-war and war periods.





The third place in order of priority among imports was represented by iron and steel, which amounted to Rs. 18 crores. During 1922, as in 1921, the world's production was abnormally low. The year 1922 showed some improvement; but in January the occupation of the Ruhr entirely changed the situation. All production of coal, coke, iron and steel, in the occupied area was quickly dislocated; and the curtailment of supplies disorganised the industry both in France and in Luxemburg. Continental supplies to India, which had been considerable, ceased entirely for many months; and prices, which had been on the downward grade to December 1922, rose appreciably. Throughout the year, America was fully occupied with a big home demand, and was also handicapped by industrial unrest. Her share in the trade with India declined from 13·7% in 1921-22 to 5·1% in 1922-23. The United Kingdom, on the contrary increased her share from 45·7% in 1921-22 to 48·1% in the year under review. The total imports under iron and steel increased in quantity from 613,000 tons to 746,000 tons.

3. Iron and Steel.

The fourth place in India's import trade was taken by sugar; which in 1921-22 had ranked third. Trade was depressed, owing to excessive stocks held at the end of 1921-22, and heavy losses due to the continuous fall in prices of Java sugar. The total quantity imported both refined and unrefined decreased by 38% to 442,000 tons, of which over 84% came from Java; and only 7% from Mauritius. Mauritius sugar, being manufactured within the British Empire, pays a lower rate of duty on entry into the United Kingdom; and in the future will probably be attracted more and more to the mother country if preference is maintained. Generally speaking, the higher prices which ruled in the preceding years have given an impetus to the Indian sugar industry; and in view of the reduced imports of foreign sugar, it is interesting to note that the net production of raw sugar in the country was 342,000 tons greater than in 1921-22.

4. Sugar.

The next important heading is represented by railway plant and rolling stock. As we have noticed in previous Statements, railway expenditure in India had been greatly restricted during the War; and during the quinquennium 1914-15 to 1918-19 it averaged only Rs. 473 lakhs as against the pre-war average of Rs. 891 lakhs. After the termination of the War, the value of imports under this head steadily increased from Rs. 905 lakhs in 1919-20 to Rs. 1,660 lakhs in 1920-21 and Rs. 2,186 lakhs in the following year. But in 1922-

5. Railway Plant and Rolling Stock.

23. partly owing to marked price reductions, the value fell to Rs. 1,376 lakhs. As compared with the preceding year, the value of carriages and wagons imported decreased by Rs. 434 lakhs to Rs. 645 lakhs; locomotive engines and tenders by Rs. 353 lakhs to Rs. 323 lakhs; rails, chairs and fishplate by Rs. 11 lakhs; while sleepers and keys of iron and steel showed an increase of Rs. 62 lakhs. The share of the United Kingdom declined to 94% as against 97% in 1921-22.

6. Mineral Oils.

The value of mineral oils imported into India declined slightly from Rs. 734 lakhs in 1921-22 to Rs. 680 lakhs in 1922-23; but the total quantities imported increased from 123 million gallons to 133 million gallons. The imports of kerosene amounted to 50 million gallons, as against 46·5 million gallons in 1921-22. This, however, is still smaller than the average annual import during the five pre-War years by the substantial figure of 16½ million gallons. Of the total quantity, 78% came from the United States, as against 86% in 1921-22. Coastwise imports from Burma to India proper amounted to 119 million gallons, as compared with 116 million gallons in 1921-22.

7. Hardware.

Under the head of hardware, the total value of which shows a small decrease from Rs. 592 lakhs in 1921-22 to Rs. 515 lakhs in 1922-23, the most notable feature was a large increase in the imports from Germany, which were valued at Rs. 112 lakhs, or 22% of the total, as compared with Rs. 61 lakhs or 10% in 1921-22. This increase was achieved at the expense of British and American products. Imports from the United Kingdom fell by 31% in value to Rs. 255 lakhs and from the United States of America by 25% to Rs. 77 lakhs. In general it may be noticed that the value of agricultural implements slightly decreased; while other implements and tools showed a small increase.

8. Silk.

During 1922-23 the silk trade made a slight recovery from the previous year's depression. Raw silk showed an increase of 14% in volume and 20% in value, China and Hongkong as usual maintaining the lead with 93% of the imports. Silk piece-goods, which are the most important item under this head, increased in quantity by 3%, while their value fell by 2% from Rs. 232 lakhs to Rs. 227 lakhs. To the total, Japan contribute Rs. 132 lakhs, China and Hongkong Rs. 87 lakhs, and the United Kingdom Rs. 4 lakhs.

Under liquors, the total imports increased in quantity from 4·5 million gallons to 4·6 million gallons; but the value decreased from

Rs. 377 lakhs to Rs. 343 lakhs. Over 36% of the total imports consisted of spirits, which increased in quantity, while ale, beer, porter and wines decreased. No less than 59% of the total quantity of imported liquor still consists of ale, beer and porter. The United Kingdom supplied 68%, as compared with 69% in 1921-22. Germany increased her supplies over the previous year by no less than 70%, her share rising from 393,000 gallons to 665,000 gallons, while the quantity despatched by Japan and Netherlands showed a decrease of 50%.

9. Liquors.

Of motor vehicles the importations rose from 2895 in 1921-22 to 4323 in 1922-23. The glut of old stocks mentioned in last year's Report seems now to have been cleared; as is indicated by the fact that in the six months April to September 1923, more than 3,000 cars have been imported. The value of the imports decreased by 20% to Rs. 138 lakhs, as the result of large entries of cheaper American and Canadian cars. Of the total imports 1846 cars came from Canada; 1386 from the United States, 449 from the United Kingdom and the remainder from continental countries.

10. Motor Vehicles.

We may now turn to a brief survey of the export trade of India during 1922-23. During this year, cotton, raw and manufactured, displaced jute from the position of priority. Exports of raw cotton from India increased to 3,362,000 bales as compared with 2,989,000 in 1921-22. Of the total quantity exported, Japan took 1,621,000 bales, or 48%, amounting to nearly two-thirds of her total importation. The continent of Europe increased its purchases by 40% from 715,000 bales in 1921-22 to 1,004,000 bales in 1922-23. The demand for Indian stapled cotton from Europe improved during the year, as also did British spinners' takings of Indian cottons.

India's Exports.

1. Cotton.

The internal demand for cotton yarn continued strong, both production and imports showing increases over the previous year. Exports, however, decreased considerably. The total quantity of yarn spun in Indian mills increased to 706 million lbs. as compared with 693 millions in 1921-22, and 683 million lbs. in 1914. So far as cotton piece-goods are concerned, there has been a weakening of the movement favouring Indian made, rather than imported piece-goods, upon considerations other than that of value in money. Accordingly, as we noticed, there was an increase in importations, combined with some reductions in price. The Indian textile industry thus found itself compelled to accept a considerable lowering of its margin of profit,

though output remained at almost the same level as in the previous year. The quantity exported declined from 161 million yards in 1921-22 to 157 million yards in the course of the year under review. The value of goods woven in the Indian mills during the year was Rs. 59½ crores as against Rs. 60¾ crores in 1921-22, the value of cotton goods imported having increased during same period from Rs. 45½ crores to Rs. 61 crores.

2. Jute.

Under jute and jute manufactures the figures of 1922-23 showed a marked improvement upon those of 1921-22. The total weight of raw and manufactured jute shipped in the year under review increased from 1,108 to 1,250 thousand tons, while owing to improved prices the value of the exports increased from Rs. 44 crores to Rs. 63 crores. Exports of raw jute exceeded those of the previous year by 24 per cent., but were still 25 per cent. below the level of the pre-War period. The value rose by no less than 60 per cent. from Rs. 14 crores to Rs. 22½ crores. The United Kingdom took the largest quantity, 875,000 bales, which is still only about half the average demand before the War. The total exports of Jute cloth were 1,254 million yards, valued at Rs. 2,432 lakhs as compared with 1,120 million yards valued at Rs. 1,593 lakhs in 1921-22. The largest consumer was as usual the United States of America, which took 76 per cent. of the total quantity exported. Of gunny bags, the total exports amounted to 344 millions in number and Rs. 16 crores in value; which on the 1921-22 figures shows a decrease of 11 per cent. in quantity with an increase of 15 per cent. in value. The best markets for bags was Australia, which took 63 millions, as compared with 56 millions in the preceding year. Cuban demands came next with a marked increase of from 14 to 38 millions.

3. Food Grains and Flour.

Third in importance among the exports of India came food grains and flour, which amounted to Rs. 4,248 lakhs in value as against Rs. 2,999 lakhs in 1921-22. The total quantity exported amounted to 2·6 million tons, which represented an increase of 57 per cent. over last year's figure, due to the removal of the embargo on the export of rice. The value of exports under this head alone increased from Rs. 2,456 lakhs in 1921-22 to Rs. 3,470 lakhs in 1922-23. Ceylon was as usual the largest purchaser with 363,000 tons. Germany came next with 340,000 tons, which is nearly her pre-War average. The embargo on wheat exports was not removed until the end of September 1922. The Indian wheat crop for 1921-22

was estimated at 9·8 million tons, as compared with 6·7 million tons in 1920-21. The outturn was large enough to meet all domestic requirements, and the surplus available for export was considerable when the embargo was removed. Out of 220,000 tons valued at Rs. 344 lakhs, no less than 99·4 per cent. was shipped after the removal of the embargo. Of the total quantity the United Kingdom took 87 per cent. Other food grains increased in the quantities exported to 203,000 tons from 102,000 tons in 1921-22. The United Kingdom took 40 per cent. of the pulse, 59 per cent. of the maize, 63 per cent. of the barley and 30 per cent. of the jowar and bajra.

4. Oil-Seeds.

The fourth place among India's exports during the year under review was taken by oil-seeds. Generally speaking the supplies were plentiful; and although the industrial activities of Europe had by no means recovered, the total demands on India improved considerably. Indeed the trade in oil-seeds took a large step towards expansion to the full pre-War demand. The total exports amounted to 1·18 million tons, valued at Rs. 2,735 lakhs. These figures represented an increase of 60 per cent. in quantity and 57 per cent. in value as compared with 1921-22. All the principal descriptions of seed were exported in larger quantities, there being marked increases in linseed, cotton seed and rape seed, while groundnuts, castor oil and copra also showed improvement.

5. Tea.

The improvement in the position of the tea trade noticed in last year's statement continued; the outstanding and most favourable feature of the year being the steady advance in the price of common teas. The quantity of tea was well above the average; and careful plucking, absence of stalk, and improved manufacture regained for northern Indian teas their high reputation for quality. The total production throughout India was estimated at 311 million lbs. in 1922 as compared with 274 million lbs. in 1921. Out of this total, no less than 288 million lbs. was exported; a figure which shows the extent to which Indian tea depends on the foreign market. It is difficult exactly to estimate the quantity of tea retained for consumption in the country; but a rough calculation would seem to indicate that 28 million lbs. were consumed in India in 1922-23, as compared with 31 million lbs. in 1921-22.

6. Hides and Skins.

The exports of raw hides and skins amounted to 45,700 tons, valued at Rs. 571 lakhs in 1922-23 as compared with 48,500 tons and Rs. 598 lakhs in 1921-22. Exports of raw hides to the United Kingdon showed a further fall, due to

competition both with Russian hides and hides from the River Plate. Germany was again India's best customer. The export of goat skins decreased to 20,600 tons valued Rs. 345 lakhs, from 21,700 tons valued at Rs. 410 lakhs in 1921-22. As usual, the United States took the lead, although her demands were less by 1,200 tons than in the preceding year. There was a welcome revival in the trade of tanned hides and skins; the total quantity exported increasing from 10,300 tons to 14,600 tons; and the value rising from Rs. 392 lakhs to Rs. 506 lakhs. The United Kingdom took the bulk of the exports.

Direction of Trade.

In examining the direction of trade it may be noticed that India's exports usually exceed her imports in the case of all countries with which she has large dealings, the only exception being the United Kingdom. During the year under review, the chief feature was an improvement in the share of the United Kingdom both in exports and imports, and a continuance of the fall in the share of the United States in the import trade. Germany increased her share both of imports and exports. A study of the percentage figures show that under imports the share of the United Kingdom rose from 56·6 per cent. in 1921-22 to 60·2 per cent. in 1922-23; and in exports from 20·1 per cent. to 22·4 per cent. For purposes of comparison it may be noted that the pre-War shares of the United Kingdom in the import and export trade were 64·1 per cent. and 23·4 per cent. respectively. The share of the Dominions and other British possessions in imports dropped from 10 per cent. to 7 per cent.; due mainly to the cessation of the large wheat imports from Australia, and decreased imports of Mauritius sugar, Natal coal and Uganda cotton. The share in exports also fell from 21 to over 18 per cent. Figures for the whole British Empire show that the Commonwealth had 52 per cent. of the total trade as against 54 per cent. in 1921-22. The share of the United States in the import trade, though greater than before the War dropped from 8·1 per cent. in 1921-22 to 5·7 per cent. in 1922-23. Her share of the export trade, however, improved from 10 per cent. to 11·1 per cent. Japan made a slight recovery in imports from 5·1 per cent. to 6·2 per cent.; but her share in export trade dropped from 15·7 per cent. to 13 per cent. Germany's share in imports improved from 2·7 per cent. to 5·1 per cent.; and in exports from 6·7 per cent to 7·2 per cent.

Some Comparisons.

If we turn to the direction of trade in a few of the more important commodities, it will be noticed that in iron and steel the United Kingdom made a recovery, although her share is still less than in the pre-War year. The United State

receded considerably from the position gained during the War, while the trade of Germany improved. In machinery both the United Kingdom and Germany improved their position at the cost of the United States, whose share fell from 13·2 per cent. to 9·6 per cent. Under the heading motor-cars, the share of the United Kingdom fell from 50 to 31 per cent., while that of Canada and the United States rose from 8 per cent. and 25 per cent. to 20 per cent. and 33 per cent. respectively. In cotton manufactures, the United Kingdon increased her share from 83 per cent. to 84 per cent. On the export side the United Kingdom took 87 per cent. of the tea, which was distinctly higher than her pre-War share. Under raw cotton the share of Japan fell from 60 per cent. in 1921-22 to 49 per cent. in 1922-23. Of oil-seeds the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands and Italy took greater shares of the considerably increased total exports, while the shares of Belgium and France decreased. Under food grains the shares of the principal importing countries showed decreases, with the exception of the United Kingdom, whose share was 12 per cent. in 1922-23 as compared with 10 per cent. in 1921-22. Under raw jute Germany's share fell from 30 per cent. in 1921-22 to 25 per cent. in 1922-23 ; and of France from 12 per cent. to 10 per cent. That of the United Kingdom and United States rose respectively from 20 per cent. and 13 per cent. to 26 per cent. and 15 per cent. In hides and skins the United States lost ground considerably, and both Great Britain and to a less extent Germany made progress at her expense. The share of the United Kingdom rose from 33 to 42 per cent.; while that of the United States fell to 26 per cent. from 34 per cent.

The share of individual countries is also a matter of some interest. Imports from the United Kingdom were valued at Rs. 140 crores, as compared with Rs. 151 crores in 1921-22. The value of the exports increased by Rs. 21 crores to Rs. 70 crores. Cotton manufactures including twist and yarn accounted for 42 per cent. of the total imports as compared with 31 per cent. in 1921-22. The other important groups, namely metals and manufactures, machinery, and railway plant and rolling stock, accounted for 32 per cent. of the total imports, as against 41 per cent. in 1921-22. Imports of cotton piece-goods increased by 52 per cent. in quantity to 1,453 million yards from 955 million yards in 1921-22, and by Rs. 15 crores in value to Rs. 52 crores. The quantity of iron and steel imported increased to 359,000 tons from 281,000 tons, but its value fell from Rs. 1,138 lakhs to Rs. 1,066 lakhs. Machinery and mill work fell by Rs. 8½

The United Kingdom.

crores to nearly Rs. 20 crores; and railway plant by Rs. 8 crores to Rs. 10 crores. Only 2,800 tons of raw cotton valued at Rs. 45 lakhs were imported as compared with 12,400 tons valued at Rs. 151 lakhs in the preceding year. The principal articles exported to the United Kingdom were tea (over Rs. 19 crores); raw and manufactured jute (Rs. 8¼ crores); seeds (nearly Rs. 8 crores); food grains (Rs. 5 crores); raw and tanned hides and skins (Rs. 4½ crores); raw wool (Rs. 4⅛ crores); raw cotton (Rs. 4 crores) and lac (Rs. 2¼ crores). The total quantity of tea exported decreased by 8 per cent.; while its value increased by Rs. 3 crores to Rs. 19 crores. Raw jute increased by 72 per cent. in quantity and in value by 106 per cent.; the total value of raw jute and jute manufactures showing an increase of 70 per cent. from Rs. 493 lakhs to Rs. 838 lakhs. The total quantity of seeds exported rose from 219,000 tons to 421,000 tons; while food grains increased from 164,000 tons to 357,000 tons. Raw hides and skins showed a decrease of 300 tons from the 4,000 tons in the preceding year; while tanned hides and skins increased to 12,300 tons from 7,800 tons. Among British possessions it may be noticed that trade with Ceylon, the Straits Settlements, and Mesopotamia showed slight increases. The trade with Australia decreased to Rs. 645 lakhs from Rs. 1,349 lakhs, the cause of the decline being mainly in wheat. Imports from the Union of South Africa decreased to Rs. 82 lakhs from Rs. 145 lakhs, mainly on account of reduced imports of coal from Natal. Exports to the Union on the other hand increased from Rs. 227 lakhs to Rs. 244 lakhs, chiefly due to larger shipments of rice and jute bags.

British Possessions.

As in the preceding year, Japan maintained the second place in India's foreign trade; the value of her total trade showing an increase of Rs. 3 crores over the Rs. 52 crores in 1921-22. Imports increased from Rs. 13½ crores to Rs. 14½ crores, and exports from Rs. 38¾ crores to Rs. 40¾ crores. The value of cotton manufactures imported increased to Rs. 8 crores from 6½ crores in preceding year; and represented 56 per cent. of the total import trade. The bulk of the imports of glassware, matches and silk manufactures came from Japan. No less than 84 per cent. of the total value of exports to Japan was accounted for by raw cotton.

Japan.

The United States enjoyed the third place in India's foreign trade. The value of imports from that country fell from Rs. 22 crores to Rs. 13 crores; but exports increased from Rs. 26 crores to Rs. 35 crores. The principal articles imported from United States were mineral oil, machinery, iron and

United States.

steel, motor vehicles and hardware. These articles accounted for 70 per cent. of the import trade. Of the export trade nearly 89 per cent. was made up of jute, shellac, raw hides and skins and castor seeds.

Germany.

Germany was the most important continental country in India's foreign trade; and in the year under review she succeeded in ousting Java from the fourth place. The total value of Indo-German trade increased by no less than 44 per cent. to Rs. 34 crores, thus exceeding the pre-War average of Rs. 31¾ crores. Imports increased by 64 per cent. to Rs. 1,189 lakhs; while exports rose by 36 per cent. to Rs. 2,264 lakhs. The principal articles imported show increases in almost every direction. Iron and steel rose by 50 per cent. in quantity and 44 per cent. in value; synthetic dyes by 69 per cent. in quantity and 32 per cent. in value. Hardware improved by Rs. 52 lakhs and machinery by Rs. 23 lakhs. There were also important increases in brass, instruments, aluminium, glass and glassware and wool, paper and pasteboard and liquors.

Balance of Trade.

Before examining the balance of trade in the year 1922-23, we may point out that in normal years there is a large surplus of exports over imports of private merchandise. This is liquidated as a rule by the payment of interest on debt and other home charges, together with the importation of precious metals. The average credit balance of merchandise was Rs. 78 crores in the five pre-War years and Rs. 76 crores during the War years. In 1919-20, which was a year of unprecedently large trade, this credit balance rose to Rs. 129 crores. In 1920-21 there was a debit balance on the other hand of nearly Rs. 78 crores, which in 1921-22 decreased to 21 crores. But the general progress of Indian's advance towards normal conditions was indicated by the fact that in 1922-23 this debit was once more converted into a credit balance of more than Rs. 90 crores. The total visible balance of trade as measured by statistics of merchandise, treasure, enfaced rupee paper and the like during 1922-23 was in India's favour to the extent of Rs. 28 crores, as compared with a debit balance of Rs. 32 crores in 1921-22.

Calendar year 1923.

In the paragraphs immediately preceding we have been dealing with India's trade during the financial year 1922-23, which is the latest period for which the detailed analysis presented in the annual publication known as the Review of Trade is available. The tendencies towards a revival of India's export trade, which we have already noticed, were amply apparent during the nine months April to December 1923. With the exception

of August and November, every month showed a substantial increase in the export trade over the corresponding month of 1922; and the total value of the exports from the country during 1923 was greater by Rs. 48·9 crores than that for the calendar year 1922. The bulk of the increase was in wheat (Rs. 912 lakhs), in tea (Rs. 826 lakhs) and above all in raw cotton (Rs. 2,223 lakhs). On the other hand there were notable decreases in the exports of cotton twist and yarn. The import trade does not show corresponding results. There were notable decreases in the value of coal (Rs. 262 lakhs), railway materials (Rs. 256 lakhs), grey piece goods (Rs. 453 lakhs), cotton yarn (Rs. 297 lakhs), and wheat (Rs. 470 lakhs). Certain commodities nevertheless showed a considerable improvement. Coloured piece-goods increased by Rs. 685 lakhs, and sugar by Rs. 226 lakhs; while there were small increases under woollen piece-goods, iron and steel sheets and plates, kerosene oil, and certain other commodities. In general, we may summarise the tendencies of the year by saying that on the exports side the categories of food, drink, and tobacco increased by Rs. 1,803 lakhs, due to larger shipments of wheat and tea; raw materials and articles mainly unmanufactured increased by Rs. 2,473 lakhs, due chiefly to the export of raw hides and skins, seeds and raw cotton; while articles wholly or mainly manufactured also advanced by Rs. 608 lakhs. There was in fact a large increase in the value of exports of lac, jute manufactures, raw cotton, raw hides and skins, wheat, tea and linseed and rape-seed; while cotton yarn, rice and sesamum seed showed noticeable decreases.

Exports.

On the import side, the imports under the category of food, drink and tobacco decreased by Rs. 279 lakhs as compared with 1922, due mainly to smaller imports of wheat and salt. Raw material and articles mainly unmanufactured showed a decline of Rs. 252 lakhs, which is ascribed principally to the decrease under coal. Articles wholly or mainly manufactured fell by Rs. 1,040 lakhs, notwithstanding a considerable increase in the imports of cotton silk and woollen manufactures. This was due to smaller imports of machinery, hardware, wrought copper, steel bars and railway plant. We may summarise the noticeable features of India's import trade during the calendar year 1923 as large increases in the imports of white and coloured cotton piece-goods, sugar, iron or steel sheets and plates and woollen piece-goods; and heavy decreases in the imports of wheat, grey piece-goods, machinery, cotton yarn, railway plant and coal. During the first three months of the calendar year 1924, the

Imports.

export trade of India showed symptoms of ever-increasing vitality. In January the value of the exports of Indian produce and manufacture attained the high record of Rs. 3,614 lakhs. In February there was a slight decline to Rs. 3,419 lakhs, which was nevertheless Rs. 1,522 lakhs above the level of February 1923. In March 1924, the value of exports touched a fresh record of Rs. 4,014 lakhs. At the close of the year 1923-24 there was a balance of trade in India's favour of Rs. 6,179 lakhs, as against Rs. 2,496 lakhs in the preceding year.

Prospects for 1924.

Vitally connected with the commercial prosperity of India is the question of the tariff. Here as in other countries, the matter has a political as well as an economic side. For the last quarter of a century, powerful sections of Indian opinion have been demanding the formulation of some scheme of protection to safeguard the nascent industries of the country against the overwhelming burden of competition. In the fiscal affairs of India, a new era has dawned with the introduction of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. In consequence of the changed relations between India and England, it was laid down that India will in future control in ever-increasing degree her own fiscal policy. As a matter of convention, the Secretary of State for India now normally refrains from interference in fiscal matters when the Government of India and the Indian Legislature are in agreement. The non-official members both of the Council of State and of the Legislative Assembly took the earliest opportunity of impressing upon the Administration the desirability of taking early steps to realise the results which the country could derive from the new convention. Accordingly in 1921 a Commission was appointed to examine, with reference to all interests concerned, the tariff policy of Government. The Commission began its work in November 1921, and its conclusions were published in the summer of 1922. The preliminary recommendations formulated in the Report urged the Government of India to adopt a policy of protection, which was to be applied with discrimination along certain general lines carefully indicated. In the selection of industries for protection, and in the degree of protection to be afforded, the Commission recommended that the inevitable burden on the community should be as light as was compatible with the development of the industries themselves. The Report recommended the creation of a permanent Tariff Board, consisting of three members nominated by Government, to investigate the claims of particular industries to

The Tariff.

The Fiscal Commission.

protection, to watch the operation of the tariff, and generally to advise Government and the Legislature in carrying out the policy formulated by the Commission. In dealing with claims for protection, this Tariff Board was to satisfy itself that the industries seeking protection possessed natural advantages; that without the help of protection they were not likely to develop and that they would eventually be able to face world-competition unprotected. The Commission further proposed that raw materials and machinery should ordinarily be admitted free of duty; that semi-manufactured goods used in Indian industries should be taxed as lightly as possible; and that the industries essential for the purposes of national defence, for the development of which Indian conditions are not unfavourable, should receive adequate protection. It was also recommended that no export duties should ordinarily be imposed except for purely revenue purposes; but that when it was considered necessary to restrict the export of food grains, such restriction should be effected by means of temporary duties.

Recommendations.

Dealing with the question of Imperial preference, which was among the most important items of their terms of reference, the Commission suggested that no general system should be introduced; but that the question of adopting a policy of preferential duties on a limited number of commodities should be referred to the Indian Legislature after the Tariff Board had conducted a preliminary examination. This policy, however, was to be governed by certain principles. In the first place no preference should be granted on any article without the approval of the Legislature; no preference should be given in such a way as to diminish the protection required by India's industries; and no preference should involve on the balance any appreciable economic loss to the country. It was further proposed that any preferences which it might be found possible to give to the United Kingdom should be granted as a free gift; but that in the case of other parts of the Empire, preference should be granted only by agreements mutually advantageous. Although the Report was signed by all the members of the Commission, five of the Indian members put forward a supplementary minute of dissent. They did not disagree with the main conclusions; but considered that the conditions and provisos laid down were calculated to impair their utility.

Imperial Preference.

Those who signed this minute maintained the necessity for an unqualified pronouncement that the policy best suited for India is protection. In other directions also they desired to underline and strengthen the language

The Minute of Dissent.

of the main Report, where they considered it to be half-hearted and apologetic. They expressed disagreement with their colleagues upon certain points connected with excise, Imperial preference and the constitution of the Tariff Board. Generally speaking, however, the broad unanimity of the recommendations put forward by the Commission as a whole was but little impaired by the minute of dissent.

The publication of the Report inevitably led to protracted discussion. Opinion, broadly speaking, divided itself into two groups.

Conflicting Interests.

The landed and agricultural interests together with the European commercial community, which is predominantly free-trade in its views, denounced the burden that the policy of protection would naturally impose upon the vast consuming population of India. On the other hand the great majority of political opinion joined with the indigenous manufacturing interests in condemning the Report as being too cautious. But from the discussion it was plain, first, that such Indian sentiment as exists in vocal shape upon the tariff question is principally protectionist; and secondly that there is a general belief both among Indian politicians and Indian commercial men that a new day will dawn with the adoption of a thorough-going policy of protection. In other words, while the producer class of India has clearly perceived where its interest lies, the consumer class, which includes the mass of the population so far as foreign trade is concerned, at present takes little interest in the tariff question. It would be interesting to speculate how long this condition of affairs is likely to last; for it seems fairly certain that if the policy of protection were to be adopted in anything like the form demanded by its more enthusiastic advocates, the resulting burden upon Indian consumers would come to them as a shock, the more unwelcome from being totally unexpected.

It is because Government realises the importance of such considerations as these, that the first steps in the direction of a protective policy

Attitude of Government.

are being taken with all caution. The facts of the situation do indeed tend to emphasise the insistence of the politically-minded classes upon the necessity for a change in the fiscal system. As a result of the modifications introduced into the tariff of late years for purely revenue requirements, India is already under a species of protection, which possesses the disadvantages of being unscientific, haphazard and insufficiently co-ordinated in respect of commercial considerations. On the other hand there still remains with Government the responsibility of safeguarding, so far as

may be, the interests of the great rural population, which is largely unvocal and so far unalive to the damage which might be inflicted upon its interests from a policy framed for the benefit of the manufacturers and of the towns.

Government accordingly decided to accept in principle the recommendations of the Report, but to lay stress upon the fact that India's tariff policy must be guided by the requirements of revenue, as well as by the interests of industry. Early in 1923 the Commerce Member of the Viceroy's Council moved the adoption by the Legislative Assembly of a motion accepting in principle the proposition that India's fiscal policy may be legitimately directed towards fostering the development of her industries. In the application of this principle, the mover explained, regard must be had to the financial needs of the country and to the present reliance of Government upon the revenues derived from customs and excise. He announced that the authorities had decided to constitute a Tariff Board, as an experimental measure for one year. After an animated debate in which the mutually conflicting interests of commerce and agriculture found clear expression, the Assembly adopted the official motion as a reasonable compromise. Shortly afterwards, Government announced that they had appointed to the Tariff Board Mr. G. Rainy, a member of the Indian Civil Service, with two non-officials, Professor Kale and Mr. Ginwala, both of whom possessed considerable experience in economic matters. The new Tariff Board proceeded to devote careful attention to the question of protecting the Indian iron and steel industry. They employed several months in a careful and elaborate investigation of the evidence submitted to them from various quarters; and their conclusions, which were published shortly after the close of the period covered by this Statement, showed that the claims for protection put forward on behalf of this industry were not ill-founded. The recommendations of Government, based upon the conclusions of the Tariff Board, were submitted to a special session of the Indian Legislature, fixed for the end of May and the beginning of June 1924.

Action taken.

The Tariff Board.

These developments represent a definite step in the direction which Indian national sentiment has for long been advocating. But whether India's fiscal autonomy will result in a protracted era of rigorous protection, may well be doubted; for such a policy would quickly produce a marked effect upon internal prices. At the moment, much of its attraction seems to

Future Policy.

derive from the feeling that India has not been free hitherto to experiment in the manner she desires. Now that a beginning is to be made, from which it will be possible to gauge the actual consequences of a cautious application of the protective system, there is every hope that the question of the tariff, which is so vital to the country's real interests, may be settled in accordance with the dictates of practical experience rather than of abstract reasoning. Last year, as we noticed in a previous Statement, there were vigorous demands from certain quarters for the establishment of an indigenous mercantile marine. This demand appears to have been based on several considerations. In the first place there was a well grounded belief among reflecting persons that India, with her long sea-board, cannot afford to neglect her development upon the ocean. In the next place, since 1914, there have been several years when there was a serious shortage of shipping, from which India's trade suffered considerably. Thirdly Indian enterprise has for long suffered from lack of any encouragement or protection; with the result that few Indian shipping companies have been able to survive the keen competition and severe rate cutting which so-called "foreign" combines have occasionally introduced into Indian waters. As a result of a resolution moved in the Legislative Assembly in 1922, a committee was appointed in 1923, under the chairmanship of Captain E. J. Headlam, Director Royal Indian Marine, to examine the whole question of the inauguration and maintenance of an Indian Mercantile Marine. The committee has at the moment of writing concluded its enquiries, but its report was not published for the information of the public until after the close of the period covered by this Statement.

A Mercantile Marine.

An important event of the year was the meeting of the Imperial Economic Conference in London. The sessions of this Conference were of great service in enabling the representatives alike of the Home Government, India and the Dominions to discuss a wide variety of matters of economic concern. The Indian Delegation consisted of Lord Peel, then Secretary of State for India, Mr. (now Sir Charles) Innes, Commerce Member of the Viceroy's Council and Mr. (now Sir Dadiba) Dalal, High Commissioner for India. A number of Resolutions of great importance were adopted. They dealt with such subjects as co-operation in financial assistance to Imperial development, Tariff Preference, Imperial Preference in public contracts and steps for the improvement of mutual trade including such matters as

The Imperial Economic Conference.

Imperial communications, Customs Formalities and co-operation for Technical Research and Information. The Resolutions of the Conference on most of these subjects were unanimous, but in one or two important matters the representatives of India had to take their own line. As regards Imperial Preference in public contracts for instance, the representatives of India were unable to accept the principle that effective preference should be given to materials produced within the Empire, but they were able to show that the policy of accepting the lowest satisfactory tender to which the Government of India were pledged had not prevented India from being Britain's best customer. Indeed in 1921 India had bought from Britain more than the three great Dominions of Canada, Australia and South African combined. Again, the representatives of India were unable to commit India to a general policy of Imperial Preference. This is a question which in India raises many difficult issues both of an economic and a political character, and Sir Charles Innes made it clear that the Government of India must continue to reserve freedom of action.

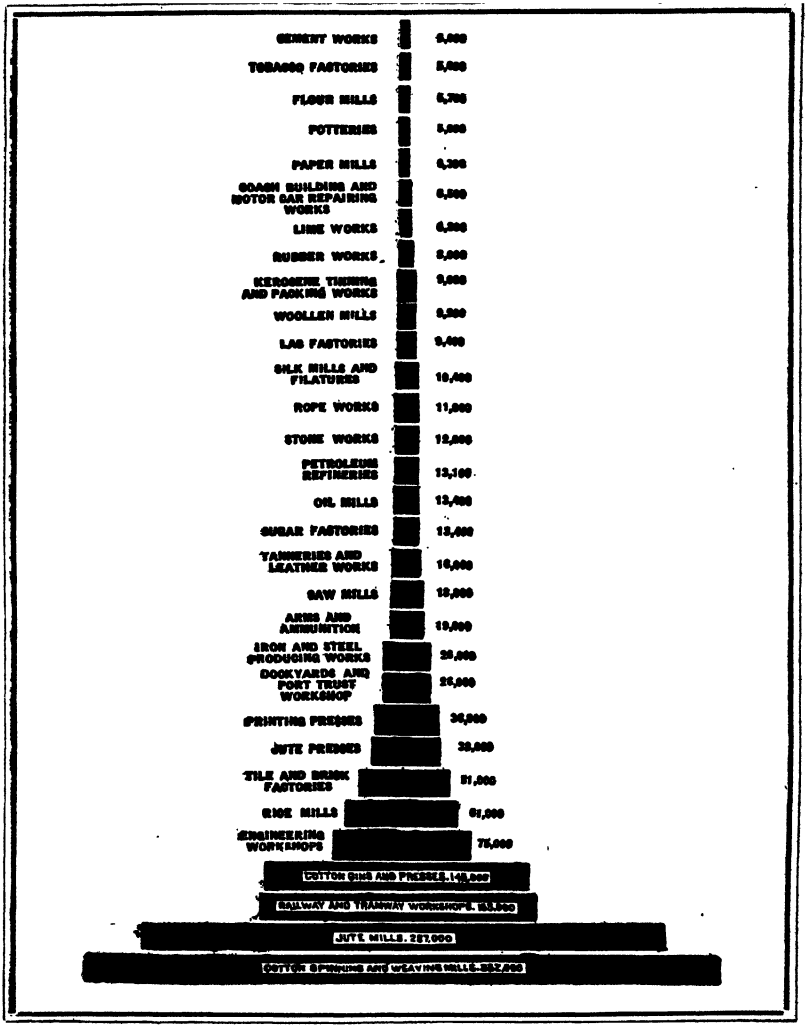
India's Position.

The general dependence of Indian trade upon the prosperity of Indian industries needs no lengthy demonstration. During the War period, the notable report of the Indian Industrial Commission pointed out that India was unable to produce more than a small fraction of the articles essential for the maintenance of ordinary civilised activities. Though the country is rich in raw material it is still very poor in industrial achievements, as a study of the diagram on the opposite page will amply demonstrate. The difficulty has hitherto been that without active support on the part of the Administration, few Indian industries, except those based on some natural monopoly, could hope to make headway against the organized competition of Western countries. In justice to the Indian Government, it must be remarked that some time prior to the War, certain attempts to encourage Indian industries by means of pioneer factories and Government subsidies had been planned, but were effectually discouraged from Whitehall. Fortunately, the history of the War period has demonstrated the necessity of Government playing an active part in the industrial development of the country.

The State and Industries.

In February 1921 the Secretary of State sanctioned the creation of a Central Department of Industries as a permanent branch of the Government of India. Its scope included industries and industrial intelligence; industrial

The Department of Industries and Labour.



NOTE.—The number represents the average number of persons employed daily in the respective industries.

1. Cotton Mills include figures for spinning and weaving establishment not classed as mills.
2. Engineering workshops include figures for electrical engineering workshops, ship-building and engineering works iron and brass foundries and canal foundries and workshops.
3. Dockyards and Port Trust workshops include figures for harbour works.
4. Arms and Ammunition include figures for arsenals, gun carriage factory, sappers and miners workshop and mechanical transport repair works.

exhibitions; central institutions for industrial training; geology and minerals, including the geological survey of India; the administration of the Indian Mines Act, the Indian Explosives Act, and the Indian Petroleum Act. The Indian Factories Act, and other labour legislation also fell within its sphere; while patents and designs, copyright, legislation relating to electricity and steam boilers, stores, stationery and printing, inter-provincial migration, and salt were among its functions. To these spheres of activity were added, after the regrouping of subjects consequent upon the Retrenchment Committee's Report, meteorology and civil aviation, posts and telegraphs, irrigation and public works; while salt was transferred to the Board of Inland Revenue, working as part of the Finance Department, and exhibitions to the Department of Commerce. The department thus constituted is now known as the Department of Industries and Labour.

Central and Local Machinery for Industrial Development.

With the introduction of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, the development of Industries has become a provincial transferred subject, hence the policy to be pursued in granting assistance to industries, the development of industrial and technical education, and to a large extent the research work necessary to establish the value of raw material, are now controlled by the Ministers in charge of the Provincial Departments of Industries. The constitution, however, permits the Central Government to exercise supervision over industrial subjects when such a course is considered necessary. For example, the establishment of pioneer industries for the conduct of which on an adequate scale the resources of any one Province would be inadequate; or the establishment, in similar circumstances, of institutes for carrying on research and training which affect the country as a whole, may be made the direct concern of the Government of India. Such questions as that of making India self-supporting, in the matter of stores required for military purposes, also fall within the scope of the Central Department of Industries and Labour. In which connection it may be mentioned that a contract has now been entered into with the Calcutta Soap Works, Ltd., for the manufacture of dynamite-glycerine; and a loan of Rs. 25,000 has been paid to the firm to enable them to purchase special refining plant. On the side of technical education and research, progress has been greatly hindered by the necessities of retrenchment. The Central Government had designed to establish a School of Mines and Geology; a scheme for the establishment of a

Some Activities of the Central Department.

Chemical Research Institute has had to remain in abeyance on account of the financial position. A certain amount of progress has been made with the School of Mines; but in pursuance of the recommendations of the Retrenchment Committee, no provision could be set aside for further expenditure on the construction of the school during the year under review. A revised scheme for the management of the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, which has resulted from the recommendations of a special committee of enquiry, is still under discussion. It is hoped, however, that the new plan will soon be brought into force. It may also be noticed that in pursuance of a resolution passed by the Legislative Assembly early in 1922, the Government of India have awarded three scholarships for the study of mining, geology and metallurgy, tenable in England for a period of three or four years each.

Industrial Education.

Among the most important of the proposals made by the Industrial Commission is probably that of the local purchase of Government and railway stores. Although the principle that Government stores should be purchased in India wherever possible has long been recognised, the absence of any institution for the amalgamation of indents and for technical inspection during manufacture, has rendered its practical application difficult. Manufacturing industries could not of course, be started without a sufficient and continuous market, while orders could not be placed so long as there existed no adequate means of manufacture. Accordingly, a machinery was instituted for bringing Government buyers into effective touch with local manufactures. This machinery soon developed into the Indian Stores Department. The scheme for its creation was subjected to review by the Retrenchment Committee, which recommended that further expansion should be postponed until it could be ascertained whether the Provinces were prepared to utilise it for their transactions; and until such time as expansion was financially justified. After careful consideration, the Government of India nevertheless decided to proceed with the development of the Department so far as circumstances permitted. In arriving at this decision they were largely influenced by the fact that in the absence of a properly constituted Stores Department, with intelligence purchase and inspecting agencies, it was impossible to divert to Indian mills and workshops the large indents which are now sent to London. Further, in their opinion, the quantities of stores at present purchased on Government and railway account

Purchase of Stores.

Indian Stores Department Expansion.

were of themselves sufficient to justify the existence of the organization. In pursuance of this decision, branches were constituted for the purchase of engineering stores and materials; and for the acquirement and dissemination of information regarding actual and potential sources of supply in the country. Further, the office of the Superintendent of Local Manufacture and Government Test House, has been reconstituted; and the inspection work hitherto undertaken by it has been handed over to a new branch at Calcutta, which is to constitute the nucleus of the Inspection Branch of the Department. As exemplifying the importance of the work at present performed by the Indian Stores Department, it may be mentioned that during the year under review, textile goods were purchased to the aggregate value of Rs. 105½ lakhs, and engineering materials and plant—a feature of the Department's activities which commenced only in June 1923—to the figure of Rs. 12½ lakhs. The period witnessed a marked increase in the inspection, testing and analytical work of the Department. The total value of the materials inspected by the Test House in the Calcutta Circle of Inspection amounted approximately to Rs. 201 lakhs, or 43 per cent. above the figure for the previous year. The tonnage of the material inspected at the Metallurgical Inspectorate was 157,000; representing an increase of 34 per cent. over last year. The number of tests and analyses carried out at the Test House and the Metallurgical Inspectorate amounted to 5,080 and 2,030, respectively, which are increases of 20 per cent. and 19 per cent. over last year's statistics. It seems likely that in the near future the work of the Department will be considerably increased by the revision of the Stores Purchase Rules on the lines recommended by the report of the Railway Industries Committee. Keen interest has been taken by political opinion in the possibility of purchasing in India many kinds of railway stores, for which at present indents are sent to London.

Analytical and Testing Work.

Among the miscellaneous activities of the Department of Industries and Labour during the year under review, we may select for notice three or four of the most important. The rapid increase in the expenditure on Government stationery and printing has for some time engaged the attention of the authorities. In January 1922 an experienced officer was placed on special duty to examine all possible avenues of economy. In consequence, various proposals were made both for controlling the printing work of the Government of India and for regulating the employment of articles of stationery in the various offices. The year 1923 witnessed

Printing.

important developments in the measures introduced to effect savings and secure efficiency. As a result of one year's working of the new system, savings to the extent of Rs. 40 lakhs were made, and throughout the whole of 1923, expenditure continued to show a satisfactory decline. The purchase system has been commercialised with a view to ensuring satisfactory quality at a business price, and it has been found possible to purchase 75 per cent. of the articles of stationery in India. An entirely new organization for the provision of forms has been instituted with remarkable success, and the system of standardization is now accepted in every Department. In the realms of printing, great strides have been made towards efficiency and economy. The amalgamation of the two Simla printing presses has been completed; and the new press has been housed in a remodelled building, and re-equipped as the first purely machine composition press in the country, at a cost which has been more than covered by the sale of obsolete plant and surplus property. A complete reorganization of the Calcutta presses is now in progress. Further, the whole publication system has been overhauled. The Government of India have resolved to take up the business of publishing in right earnest; and early in the year 1924 a central office, including a bookshop of imposing appearance, will be established in Calcutta. This branch has been developed on commercial lines, and much attention has been paid to modern publicity requirements. Another activity of the Industries Department during the year under review relates to amendments in the Mining Rules, particularly regarding concessions for oil. These amendments extend both the period and the scope of prospecting licenses. The principle has also been accepted of permitting the holders of iron ore concessions to keep reserve areas in hand, while the rate of royalty leviable in future will be regulated by the market value of pig iron. In connection with the general subject of mines, it may be mentioned that the Indian Mines Act was revised during the year under review. The questions of fixing a period after which the employment of women in underground workings of mines is to be prohibited, and of starting a system of shifts in mines, have been referred to Local Governments for opinion. Draft regulations have also been drawn up under the new Act, and forwarded for mining bodies and local administrations for the expression of their views. The existing rules under the Act of 1901 have generally been incorporated; but the provision of some rules have been strengthened,

The new System.

Revision of Mining Rules.

The Indian Mines Act.

and certain new regulations inserted. The most important of these relate to the certification of mines surveyors and of underground foremen; to matters relating to the raising and lowering of persons; to the conditions of roads and working places; to the use and custody of explosives; and to the use of safety lamps. As a result of an explosion of coal dust which occurred early in 1923 at Parbelia Colliery in Bihar and Orissa, involving the loss of 74 lives, Government appointed a representative committee to enquire into the danger of such explosions, and to report what means are necessary or desirable to provide against the risk of their occurrence. Among other industrial regulations of an important nature, mention may be made of the Bill to consolidate and amend the law relating to steam boilers. This passed through the Indian Legislature in February 1923, and regulations thereunder framed after consultation with the Board of Trade, Boiler and Insurance Companies, and Boiler Manufacturers, were finally published by the Government of India in October 1923. From the 1st January 1924 the Act and the Regulations came into operation. It may also be mentioned that the reciprocal arrangements for the protection of patents entered into with the United Kingdom, New Zealand, South Africa and Ceylon, during 1922 were further extended to Australia and Canada during the year under review.

Coal Dust Committee.

Steam Boilers.

Protection of Patents.

Valuable work in connection with the popularization of Indian industries in other parts of the world has been performed by the various exhibitions held in England of recent years. From the Indian point of view, the British Industries Fairs of 1922 and 1923 yielded not unsatisfactory results. Steps have been taken to secure that India takes her proper place in the British Empire Exhibition of 1924. A building of Indian design, covering a total space area of about 100,000 sq. ft. and estimated to cost over £100,000, has been erected largely from Indian material. Separate courts have been allotted to Provincial Governments and to such of the Indian States as desire to have exhibitions of their own; while the central space has been devoted to exhibits of All-India interest, including forests and cotton. The general arrangements have been in charge of the High Commissioner for India, who has been assisted by advisory committees in London; while Diwan Bahadur T. Vijayaraghavacharya of the Madras Civil Service, the Commissioner for India for the Exhibition, has devoted much energy to the task of ensuring

British Empire Exhibition.

that the principal products of India's industrial activity are adequately brought to the notice of the Empire.

From what has been said as to the importance of the part to be played by the Provincial Ministers in the future direction of the industrial activities of the various local Governments it will be plain that close consultation between the Central and Provincial Departments is essential. Accordingly, a series of conferences have been held between the Government of India and the representatives of the Provincial Departments of Industries, with a view to laying down methods of co-operation.

Central and Local Industrial Direction.

One of the most noticeable feature of India's new industrial progress has been the increasing strength of the provincial organizations. A brief review of the work accomplished by the Departments of Industry of the Local Governments will indicate at once the importance of the field which now lies open to popular enterprise, and the unfortunate limitations which financial stringency at present imposes upon its development. In the Punjab, for example, the financial position of the year precluded the initiation of any new scheme. Fortunately, the activities of the Department of Industries were not specifically curtailed. One of the chief of these functions is the collection and dissemination of commercial and industrial intelligence. A good library open to the public has been built up ; and printed sources of information are supplemented by general and special enquiries carried out by the industrial surveyors. The Department is thus enabled to deal with the numerous demands for information on such subjects as the sources of the supply of raw material for manufactured articles ; the outlets for the disposal of Provincial products, and the possibilities of starting various industries. Mention may be made in this connection of the Punjab Arts and Crafts Depot, which has succeeded in bringing the craftsmen of the Province into touch with wider markets and in improving the design and workmanship of the articles which they make. Valuable work has also been done in connection with the Tanning Industry. Government has undertaken to construct a model tannery, while improved methods of curing and packing are being pursued. In the case of the weaving industry, the Punjab Department of Industries is endeavouring to introduce the fly-shuttle loom and more readily marketable cloth patterns. It is however pointed out that no improvements in methods of working can enable hand-loom weaving to

Provincial Industrial Organisation.

The Punjab.

struggle successfully with the competition of the mills except in the case of artistic goods, where the individual attention and taste of the hand-worker should always enable him to produce a finer article than the automatic product.

In the United Provinces also, the Department of Industries has been handicapped by financial stringency; but even under this circumstance has displayed its value by giving positive support to provincial revenues. The Stores Purchase Branch placed orders to the value of Rs. 10·6 lakhs, with an estimated saving of Rs. 1·7 lakhs. Here as elsewhere the Local Government is taking the keenest interest in the industrial development of the Province. The new Board of Industrial Loan Commissioners dealt with many applications for the financing of industrial undertakings, a sum of Rs. 1 lakh being advanced on their recommendation. Smaller industrial schemes were financed to the extent of Rs. 15,000 by the Board of Industries. On the educational side, fresh recurring grants of Rs. 12,000 were made to private technical schools. It is reported that the progress made in technical education has, if slow been satisfactory; but that it is still handicapped by the poor quality of the candidates entering the schools. In general, the industrial situation is described as not unpromising. The leading manufacture of the Province, which is cotton, held its own and expanded, despite the dumping of Japanese goods. Silk and sugar prospered; but the hide and skin market was dull, and the glass industry experienced great depression owing to the competition of German and Japanese goods. On the whole, existing industries are offering stronger opposition to foreign competition; while new ventures are tentatively appearing.

The United Provinces.

In Bihar and Orissa a scheme for an engineering college has been finally approved, and work on the extra buildings is commencing. The Orissa School of Engineering has been completed; and the establishment of a technical institute at Muzaffarpore is under consideration. But the postponement of the project for the Imperial School of Mines and Geology has caused disappointment to the local Government, which notes that until this institution comes into being, Indians have little chance of qualifying themselves for the Geological Survey and the Mining Inspectorate. At present the only education which can be given in this direction is provided by the evening mining classes designed to enable young men working in the Jharia Fields to qualify themselves for the post of manager in second-class collieries. Among aided institutions, the Jamshedpur Metallurgical Institute has ... an excellent

Bihar and Orissa.

start. Negotiations for the establishment of the East Indian Railway's Technical Institute at Jamalpur have been completed. This Institute will eventually train over 200 boys in mechanical and electrical engineering, locomotive work and permanent way construction and maintenance. In the encouragement of the weaving industry, matters proceed somewhat slowly. In certain places, the introduction of the fly-shuttle loom progresses satisfactory in accordance with the activities of demonstration parties. In other areas, the conservatism of the weavers has still to be overcome. The new Cotton Experimental Testing Station recently completed its first full year's work. As a headquarters for the demonstration parties, and a training ground for the staff, it is meeting a long-felt want; while the experiments carried out are beginning to bear fruit. The Silk Institute has so far scarcely commenced work; but much is hoped from its activities. A proposal for a Cottage Industries Institute is under consideration; for the necessity of encouraging and developing subsidiary occupations among the rural population is now well recognised. Unfortunately, a somewhat severe setback to the progress of organised industries in the Province was caused by the refusal of the Legislative Council to vote supplies for the proposed sugar mill in South Bihar; and this despite the fact that only 18 months previously an almost unanimous resolution was passed in favour of the project. This is likely to discourage the preparation of further schemes of industrial development. Two other investigations of the major importance are however in progress; that for the establishment of a paper pulping mill at Cuttack is practically complete; while the proposal to stimulate match manufacture by a special enquiry into the timber resources of the Province and the best sites for factories has recently been approved. From the point of view of departmental organization, the year is noteworthy for the appointment of trained engineers as Circle Officers under the control of a Deputy Director. These officers are available for giving advice to owners of machinery and small capitalists anxious to erect plants for irrigation, oil pressing, rice hulling and the like.

Bengal.

In Bengal, research continues to be carried on in connection with the tanning industry. The Calcutta Research Tannery investigated both the commercial utility of tanning materials in the Sundarbans, and the economic methods of their utilisation. As in other provinces, experiments were carried on regarding the various woods used in the match industry; while a survey of the technical and commercial aspects of match manufacture in Bengal has been conducted. Under the heading of industrial development, we

may notice in the first place that demonstrations of improved methods of spinning, weaving and dyeing continue to be a successful feature of the Department's work. Steps are also being taken for the improvement of the cutlery and potter's industry in Burdwan. Progress towards the industrial development of the Province will, it is hoped, be facilitated by the bill for State Aid to Industry, which is now under consideration, and will probably be introduced into the Legislative Council in the course of 1924. Technical and industrial education shows good progress; and the fly-shuttle loom is rapidly spreading as the result of the efforts of the Government Weaving Institute and its connected schools. Owing to financial stringency, many new proposals for the establishment or improvement of technical schools were perforce postponed. The total number of institutions, public and private, at the beginning of 1923 was 117, at which nearly 6,000 pupils were in attendance. In Madras, the State Aid to Industries Act came into force early in the year. Pending the formation of the statutory board which this Act creates, no loans were given during 1922-23. But in the budget for 1923-24 a provision of Rs. 8 lakhs has been made for the purpose. The Board of Industries, which exercises a general supervision over the industrial development of the Presidency, met several times during the year, and two important committees were appointed, one on technical and industrial education, and the other on the leather industry. The Department of Industries participated in Industrial exhibitions held in various places in the South of India, exhibiting soap, ink, glue, finished leather, and other products of model factories. The Bureau of Commercial and Industrial Information continued to deal with a large number of enquiries from the general public, many relating to sources of supply of and markets for various articles and commodities. The fruit preserving institute at Coonor, the soap institute, the Government glue factory, and other institutions continued to work during the year. The activities of the Textile Institute at Madras were extended; and weaving parties toured the country introducing new implements and methods. Some success was attained in the extension of sericulture in several new centres. The progress of industrial education continued. The number of scholarships awarded for industrial purposes was increased; and the number of pupils under instruction in Government and in aided institutions rose to a gratifying extent.

Madras.

In Bombay the activities of the Industries Department suffered grievously on account of retrenchment. Indeed, the Department is being retained almost in a

Bombay.

skeleton form, which has prevented the possibility of any great progress in the matter of investigation. The main work has been concentrated on cottage industries; and the weaving section continued its efforts for the general popularization of the fly-shuttle loom. Lack of funds interfered to hamper demonstration work. The fisheries section of the Department was entirely closed down; and the same is true with the attempts to demonstrate the possibilities of button making by machinery. But the experiments in connection with pottery seem to indicate some prospect of success with flooring tiles and earthenware. The semi-commercial plant ordered from Europe started work in July; and a large number of experiments were conducted both with tiles and pottery. The casein industry had another prosperous year; and the demonstration factory at Anand turned its attention to the manufacture of rennet casein. A drying machine has been successfully devised to enable the manufacture of casein to be carried on during the rains. Under the heading of industrial education, it may be noticed that the Victoria Jubilee Technical Institute was faced with financial difficulties. Government came to its assistance, however, and a promise of support was also received from the Mill Owners' Association. The Institute has now moved into its new buildings, and can claim to be the best equipped and most efficient institution of its kind in India. A very promising development is to be found in the arrangements now made for giving apprentices both in the railway workshops and in the Bombay mills a course of theoretical training at the Institute. The need for training of this kind has long been felt in Bombay; and it is believed that the classes will ultimately prove of great value to the industries concerned.

We may notice that the industrial progress of India is not confined to the area under British administration. Like the Provinces, several of the more advanced Indian States possess their own Departments of Industries. Among these mention may be made of Hyderabad, Mysore, Gwalior and Baroda. In Hyderabad, for example, it is reported that the activities of the Department have extended in many directions. A Government Demonstration Weaving Factory exists; and travelling parties have been constituted to popularise the fly-shuttle loom. The Industrial Laboratory at Hyderabad has carried on experiments in the matter of the preservation of the Mohwa flower, alcoholic fermentation and vegetable dye manufacture. Loans amounting to Rs. 30,000 were granted during the year for the encouragement of small scale industries. It may further be noticed that on the occasion of His Exalted Highness the Nizam's

Indian States.

birthday, an industrial exhibition was organized on a large scale. Its success was such that the authorities have determined to hold it every year; and for this purpose a permanent building has been constructed.

From what has been said in the pages immediately preceding, it will be plain that the development of Indian industry is the object of considerable attention on the part of the authorities. Nevertheless for many years to come, the main occupation of the country seems destined to be agriculture. Three persons out of every four in India still gain their living directly from the soil. Hence it is that the improvement of that livelihood constitutes the readiest way of advancing the prosperity of the country. Unless the Indian agriculturist can be equipped with the knowledge and the capital necessary for developing the resources at his disposal, it is difficult to see how he will in future support his share of the economic burden from which no nation on the road to self-government can escape. In many places the cultivator has already learned to look upon the agricultural expert as a friend and guide; and his old attitude of suspicion towards new methods is undergoing substantial modification. Very frequently, indeed, the so-called conservatism of the Indian cultivator is merely that of the practical farmer, who requires good reasons for departing from established practices. For when the success of improved methods can be plainly demonstrated, they spread with remarkable rapidity. But the question of initial resources is of capital importance. The Indian agriculturist has as a rule little money for irrigation water, for manure, and for efficient tillage implements. Hence, the suitability of crops to local conditions becomes a matter of great moment to him. The first and obvious step towards the improvement of Indian agriculture is the provision of improved varieties of existing crops; and it is to this end that the operations of the Agricultural Departments in India are primarily directed. If only the resources of these Departments can be expanded proportionately to the magnitude of the task before them, the future prosperity of the country may be regarded as assured; for great areas of land at present wholly unutilised or insufficiently exploited, await only labour and capital for the production of valuable crops. Hitherto, it has not been found possible to expend upon scientific agriculture the amount of money which India's necessities really require. The Imperial Department of Agriculture, with its headquarters at Pusa, is maintained at a cost of little more than Rs. 9 lakhs; while the total

Indian Agriculture.

Progress and its difficulties.

The Agricultural Departments and their Work.

expenditure of all the Provincial Departments amounts to but little over £1,000,000—a total charge on the country of about ½*d.* per acre per annum. The Pusa Institute is the principal seat of agr cultural research in India. At Pusa, as at Bangalore, post-graduate courses in Agriculture and the allied sciences have been introduced, with the object of qualifying those who pursue them for a career in the Indian Agricultural Service.

Rice.

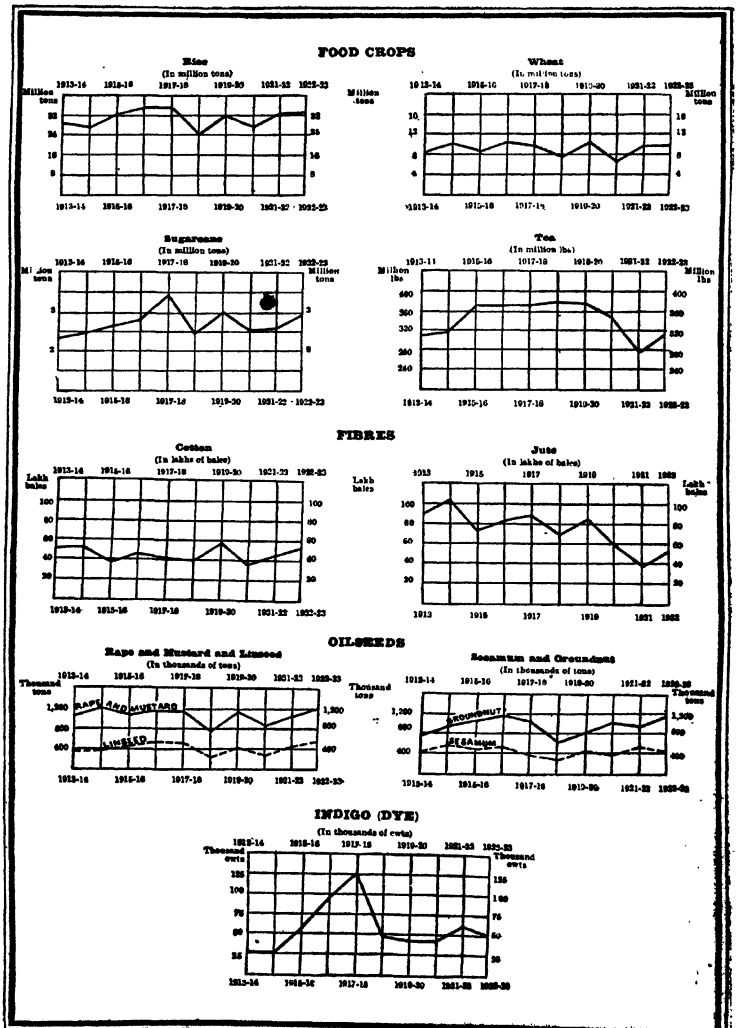
A brief note of the work accomplished by the Agricultural Departments in dealing with particular crops will amply demonstrate their immense value to India. First in importance of all the grain crops of the country is rice. Its yield is a vital factor in the welfare of the population. Accordingly, much attention is devoted by the Agricultural Departments to the selection of improved varieties and to the supply of suitable seed. The demand for this improved seed has now begun to outrun supply. In Bengal, the Indrasail variety is spreading rapidly in no fewer than five districts. In Madras, two new high yielding varieties have been brought out, and two more are under observation. In Burma, the new varieties introduced by the Agricultural Department have spread to about 100,000 acres, and the crop fetches a premium of between Rs. 10 and Rs. 15 per unit of 5,000 lbs. In Bihar and Orissa, an early type introduced by the Department has been found suitable for land too poor for the local crops. In the Central Provinces the improved strains produced by the Department have been found to give considerably enhanced acreage profit. One of them indeed yields 470 lbs. of paddy more than the local variety, and thus gives an increased income of £1 per acre to the cultivator. In Bombay, the new strains of Kolamba rice have given an outturn of from 16% to 27% more than the ordinary varieties. If the whole rice crop could be enhanced throughout the country in something like this measure, greater benefits would result to a larger proportion of the people of India than could be realised by the improvement of any other single crop. Not only does it occupy a larger area than any other stock; but in addition it is used as a staple food by a greater percentage of the population.

Wheat.

Next to rice in importance in the list of Indian crops stands wheat. But as a rule Indian wheat is of low quality, and does not fetch good prices in the World's market. Accordingly, the work of the Agricultural Departments upon this crop consist, first, in the evolution and distribution of strains possessing superior yielding power, better quality of grain, improved strength of

DIAGRAM 10.

Yield of certain principal crops from 1913-14 to 1922-23.



straw and greater resistance to rust; and secondly in demonstrating the response of the crop to better cultivation. The improved varieties produced at Pusa have now been extended to all the wheat growing areas. Pusa Nos. 12, 4, and Punjab No. 11 are increasing in demand, and now occupy more than a million acres in the United Provinces and the Punjab alone. These varieties are also making headway in places so diverse as the Peshawar Valley, North Sind, Kathiawar, the Nilgiri Hills and the Southern Shan States. In Bihar and Orissa the area under improved wheat is increasing; while in the Central Provinces five varieties introduced by the Agricultural Department have actually become the standard wheat for the different localities for which they are suited.

Among the food crops next in importance, mention must be made of sugarcane, upon the improvement of which the Departments have expended much labour. In this commodity, the balance of trade lies decidedly against India; the imports of foreign sugar during 1922-23 amounting to 442,400 tons. The production of refined sugar in India increased during the same period from 2·59 million tons to 2·93 million tons; and there is no reason why eventually the outturn should not suffice for the needs of the country. Projects have been on foot in recent years for the encouragement of sugar production. A committee which sat to investigate the question recommended the establishment of a Sugar Research Institute and a large demonstration factory. Unfortunately it has been found impossible to give effect to these projects on account of the financial situation. But Government has established at Pusa a Sugar Bureau with the object of furnishing advice to cultivators, manufacturers and capitalists. This institution is steadily increasing the scope of its activities. In addition to the publication of statistical notes bearing on the production and consumption of sugar in different parts of the world, the Bureau has taken over the testing and multiplication of improved varieties of sugarcane for the surrounding district, and of arranging mill trials for the more promising strains. One of the main features of the sugar work of the Agricultural Departments has been the promising results attending the trials of canes produced at the breeding station at Coimbatore. These have flourished well in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, the Punjab, the Central Provinces, and the North-West Frontier Province; while in Bihar and Orissa the demand for them far exceeds the supply. Some idea of the prospects awaiting these improved varieties may be gathered from the fact that in the Central Provinces one strain has given over a period of eight

Sugar.

years an average outturn of 2,488 lbs. of rough sugar per acre more than the variety which it has displaced. The introduction of power-driven machinery for crushing cane on a small scale may also revolutionise the prospects of Indian sugar, since crude sugar manufactured on improved lines fetches from six shillings to ten shillings more for every 500 lbs. of produce than can be realised by the older processes.

Cotton.

Of textile crops, cotton is the most important. Indian stands second only to America in total production, but her cotton is shorter in staple, poorer in spinning value, and smaller in yield per acre. For many years, the Agricultural Departments have been devoting their energies to raising the quality of Indian cotton. The scope which exists for this work may be gauged from the fact that the acreage under cotton amounts to something like 21 millions. The success of a selected variety often turns upon the possibility of obtaining a sufficient premium for the improved quality. The type known as "4-F" is worth to the cultivator at least £1 per acre more than the local strains; and in the Punjab alone the increase in profits to the grower represents in the aggregate well over half million sterling. In Bombay, there is a great demand for Departmental seed, as strains of cotton well suited to different localities are evolved. The variety known as Navsari is spreading very rapidly in South Gujerat and last year seed sufficient for about 200,000 acres was distributed by the Department.

The Indian Central Cotton Committee.

In order that Indian cotton may obtain an adequate price in the World's market, it is essential not merely that the spread of the long stapled variety should be encouraged, but also that its adulteration in bulk with the short stapled local strains should be sedulously avoided. There is thus ample opportunity for close co-operation between the Departments of Agriculture, and those who trade in this important crop. In 1921, the Indian Central Cotton Committee was established to act as a connecting link between the traders and the agricultural experts, and also to serve as an advisory body to Government on all questions affecting cotton. It affords a joint meeting ground for all sections of the trade with those who are engaged in the improvement of the crop. Under the recently passed Cotton Cess Act, the Indian Central Cotton Committee has been constituted as a corporate body with funds of its own, independent of the finances of the Government of India. It derives its revenues from the levy of a small cess upon the whole of the commercial cotton crop; and devotes the proceeds to the promotion of

agricultural and technological research in the interests of the cotton growing industry. Another important legislative measure which deserves notice in this connection provides for the restriction of the transport of short staple cotton into areas where long staple cotton is grown. It is hoped that the results of this legislation will arrest the process of admixture which has produced such an alarming deterioration of the quality of the cotton crop.

Jute.

The World's supply of jute fibre is obtained almost exclusively from North Eastern India, and so long as plentiful supplies of raw material exist at reasonable prices, India enjoys a monopoly of the production. The area sown under jute from year to year is to a large extent governed by demands from abroad. During the period under review, as we have noticed in another place, the exports of jute increased considerably over that of the previous year. During 1922-23 the value of jute exports rose by no less than 43% from Rs. 44 crores to Rs. 63 crores. The work of the Agricultural Departments in connection with this important crop consists mainly in the isolation of superior yielding strains from the common mixtures found in the field. There is already a strong demand in Bengal for Departmental seed of the improved varieties, which are particularly noticeable owing to their resistance to disease. Almost one-sixth of the total acreage of jute in Bengal is now occupied by one particular Departmental variety. One of the chief difficulties lies in seed production which is usually not profitable in Bengal, since it pays the cultivator better to cut the crop for fibre. But a new field for seed-growing seems to be opening in Madras, and in Western Bengal on lands too high for paddy. The Agricultural Department has also undertaken investigations into the manure requirements of jute; and has demonstrated that the presence of potash and lime used in combination is of vital importance.

Tobacco.

The tobacco industry of India seems likely to enjoy a promising future. With the recently imposed heavy duties on imported tobacco, the prospects for growing successfully the finer grades have improved. That the field is a large one can be judged from the fact that during the year 1922-23 cigarettes to the value of Rs. 1·85 crores were imported into India. The demand for Pusa type 28, which combines yield and quality, and is suitable both for cigarette making and for general cultivation, has increased very considerably during the year under review.

The prospects before the indigo industry do not seem quite so bright. During the War, when German synthetic dyes were difficult to obtain,

the area under cultivation expanded. But now that the German dye has again come upon the market in considerable quantities, the natural product encounters severe competition. If the struggle is to be successful, the present yield per acre must be increased, and the loss in the manufacturing process reduced to a minimum. Endeavours have recently been made to achieve results in both these directions. Important investigations into the use of pure bacterial cultures are being carried on in the Pusa laboratory; and with the object of meeting the cost of measures for promoting research, an Indigo Cess Act was passed in 1921. In May 1922 the special investigations carried out by the Indigo Research Chemist were practically completed, and the remainder of the work was undertaken by the Pusa Institute. The Indigo Cess Act was repealed with effect from August 1923; but during the year under report valuable work in vat fermentation was continued at Pusa.

Indigo.

India's consumption of vegetable oils and oil cake normally engrosses a very large proportion of her total production; but during year under review excellent crops left a considerable surplus for export. Investigations during the War into the dietetic value of vegetable oils have considerably increased the scope of their use; and it seems probable that when European conditions become really settled, the demands upon India for these commodities will very greatly enhance their importance. The Agricultural Departments endeavour to select the best varieties of seed, and to introduce them into the districts for which they are most suitable. In Bihar and Orissa, certain varieties of ground nuts have been introduced into sandy soil, where the average yield per acre after treatment with ashes has amounted to exactly double the yield from untreated areas. In Madras, where the cocoanut crop is of great importance, investigations have been directed into the cause of the great variations between the yields of different trees under apparently identical conditions; and as typical of the direct practical advantages of intensive study of this kind the fact may be mentioned that the local practice of planting cocoanuts in deep pits has been proved quite unnecessary.

Oil Seeds.

During the period under review, the work which has been done in connection with rubber, coffee and tea has continued to show great promise. A number of experiments directed to the study of manurial systems are being conducted on South Indian rubber estates. Plant diseases are also being investigated; and a great advance has recently been made in the general

Rubber, coffee and tea.

use of green dressings. In coffee, the hybrids produced by the Madras Agricultural Department are now in great demand; and one of them has already proved its value in the London market. In tea, the work of the Agricultural Department is principally directed to the question of green manures; and demonstrations of their value as a means of preventing wash, and of increasing organic matter in the soil, have given satisfactory results. As we have noticed in another place, the tea industry revived, during the year under review, from the period of depression through which it had passed in 1921-22.

Fruit.

Among the more promising industries of India may be mentioned fruit growing. Those who have hitherto devoted their attention to the improvement of Indian fruit have been few; and the absence of co-operation has prevented any considerable advance. But efforts are now being constantly directed by the Agricultural Department towards inculcating the importance of careful selection of trees, and proper tillage of the soil. In Madras a special pomological station has been opened at Coonoor, where various kinds of fruit trees of improved types are on sale. In the Punjab, efforts are being made to improve the date-palms by introducing Arabian varieties imported from Mesopotamia. On the Frontier, the work done at Quetta and Tarnab has resulted in the establishment of a number of good gardens laid out and worked on up-to-date lines, both in Beluchistan and in the North-West Frontier Province. Endeavours are being made in many places to popularise the better varieties of fruits, and to introduce improved methods both of cultivation and of packing. But there is need for a more thorough investigation of the economics of fruit growing before satisfactory advance can be achieved; for example the possibility of establishing a system of co-operative marketing, such as obtains in California, has yet to be tested. But the fruit-growing industry possesses one considerable advantage in India over kindred pursuits. A certain proportion of the educated classes who do not take kindly to other species of farming, are quite willing to adopt fruit-growing as a profession.

Fodder.

Crops grown purely for fodder form a very small proportion of the cattle food of the country; and for this reason have not in the past been subjected by the Agricultural Department to the same systematic treatment as staple crops. But the fodder-question is now assuming increasing importance on account of the restriction of grazing areas through the rapid extension of arable cultivation, combined with a stricter conservation of jungles

as forest reserve. The work done by the Agricultural Departments has already tended indirectly to increase the quantity of fodder available, since improvement in the yield of grain crops involves a simultaneous increase in the yield of straw. But more and more attention is now being devoted directly to the problems of fodder raising and storing; and work of great value is being performed in demonstrating the possibility of new sources of supply. In Bombay, improved methods have been introduced in the preparation of prickly pear as emergency fodder. In the United Provinces, also, it has been discovered that a troublesome weed known as baisurai, which seriously affects the yield of unirrigated crops on account of its deep roots, can be advantageously utilised as cattle food. It is estimated that through the employment of this weed, a saving of 0·22 million tons of other fodder can be affected in the United Provinces. Since this quantity considerably exceeds the total amount imported into the Provinces during the severest fodder famines of recent years, the value of the discovery is unquestionable. As a result of large scale trials of berseem (Egyptian clover) at Pusa, this fodder is beginning to displace local varieties of fodder crops in certain localities.

Turning to the chemical side of the work of the Agricultural Departments, we may notice that soil surveys are in progress in Madras, Bihar, Bengal and Burma. In Bombay, investigations have been started to determine the physical properties of different types of soil, and to discover means of increasing their water-holding capacity. Very important work upon soil investigation has been carried on at Pusa. Nitrogen fixation in the soil by non-symbiotic organisms is being largely developed; and a method of conserving the nitrogen-content of cattle urine, suitable for use by the ordinary Indian cattle-owner has been devised. Experiments are in progress both here and elsewhere in connection with cheap methods of manure storage; and important investigations into animal nutrition are being pursued.

Soil Investigation.

As was mentioned in last year's report, the study of pests, both vegetable and animals, is a matter of great moment to India. Diseases caused by parasites are numerous and destructive, the damage done annually to rice, sugarcane and cotton in particular, being very serious. Continuous attention has been devoted by the Agricultural Departments to remedying this state of affairs; but the immensity of the problem, in combination with shortage of staff and financial stringency, continue to retard progress. One great difficulty with which the Departments are faced is the patient

Pests.

apathy of the cultivator, who believes in the majority of instances that pests and blights are the visitation of Higher Powers. Energetic propaganda has to be undertaken before the masses of the agricultural population can be persuaded of the possibility of controlling these manifestations. Another very important, if common, pest is the rat. In addition to his disservice in spreading plague, this animal constitutes no inconsiderable burden upon the food supply of the country. Experiments seem to show that the average rat consumes about 6 lbs. of grain in a year; and as the total rat population of India is estimated at about 800,000,000, the loss caused to the country by these animals must be near £15,000,000 per annum. Much attention is being devoted both by the Agricultural and by the Public Health Departments to the problem of rat extermination; as well as to the question of devising methods of storing grain in such a manner as to protect it from damage.

Rats.

A very important branch of the operations of the Agricultural Departments lies in the sphere of engineering; and is mainly connected with the improvement of the water supply in existing irrigation wells by their connection with sub-artesian supplies by pipes and bores. Work of this nature is of the greatest practical importance; and its successful development has in many Provinces added not a little to the prestige of the agricultural experts. For example, in the United Provinces, the energies of the Engineering Section have developed more and more in response to the demand for wells. The section has accordingly been much expanded, and there are now four circles, each in charge of an Assistant Agricultural Engineer. The methods of conducting the work have been thoroughly revised, so as to give landowners the full benefit of the available advice and service. Machinery is being installed in a new workshop, and it is now possible to keep a sufficient stock of essential materials and spares. During the year, sixteen installations were erected and completed, with four pumping stations; while eighteen are now under construction. The demand for tube wells is maintained; and the number of borings made during the year was 624, of which 457 were successful. These figures show a satisfactory advance on the statistics of last year, which are 591 and 393, respectively.

Agricultural Engineering.

Among the most important postulates for the success of efforts to improve Indian agriculture, may be mentioned an improvement in the cattle population. The bullock is still the principal motive power in the fields, as well as upon

Cattle.

the roads ; indeed the total number of live stock of the bovine class in India is not less than 146 millions. According to the 1919-20 Cattle Census, the number of cattle per hundred acres of sown area ranges from 86 in Bengal to 33 in Bombay ; while the number per hundred of population varies from 86 in the Manpur Pergana to 33 in Delhi. The average for British India as a whole attains the remarkable figure of 57 cattle per hundred acres of sown area and 61 cattle per hundred of the population. It might be imagined from these statistics that India is to be congratulated upon her wealth in live stock. Unfortunately, however, very considerable numbers of these cattle are maintained at an actual loss, being unfit either for labour or for milking. The real difficulty lies in the fact that the question cannot be treated as one of pure economics ; for veneration for the cow is universal throughout the larger proportion of the Indian masses. Popular sentiment will not agree to the elimination of the unfit and wasteful members of the cattle population. As a result the efforts of the authorities to improve the position labour under grave handicaps. There are however two obvious lines of advance which can be pursued without offending the religious susceptibilities of the most orthodox ; first the improvement of the breed of cattle ; and secondly its preservation both from disease and from famine. In arable areas, increased breeding is now an imperious necessity, owing to the rise in the price of working cattle. There is at present in many places a great lack of stock bulls ; while the drain of the best milk cattle into the towns, and their consequent loss for breeding purposes, has deleteriously affected the milk breeds of the country districts. At Pusa, cattle breeding has been mainly directed along two lines ; the grading up of a country milk breed; and its cross breeding with imported cattle of high milking-pedigree. The recent transfer of the three military dairy farms at Bangalore, Wellington, and Karnal to the Imperial Department of Agriculture, will greatly facilitate these experiments ; and will also enable Government to develop the educational side of cattle breeding and dairying in India. In the various Provincial Agricultural Departments, considerable work is being done by the provision of stock bulls, and by the general improvement of the chief local breeds. Progress is necessarily slow on account of the magnitude of the terms in which the problem is stated. Simultaneously with the work in improving the breeding stocks, comes the preservation of cattle from famine and epidemics. Mention has already been made of the steps taken by the Agricultural Department to increase the fodder supply ; for it is unquestionable that one method of raising

Improvement of the Breed.

the proportion of useful cattle is to popularise those forms of fodder which are at the present moment neglected. There is little doubt that a considerable percentage of India's cattle is underfed; and thus, the addition to other disadvantages due to poor stock and close inbreeding, labours under a serious handicap in the struggle for existence. Equally important is the question of preserving Indian cattle from contagious diseases. This presents certain difficulties peculiar to the country. The Agricultural Departments have to fight not merely against the natural sources of infection, which are numerous, but also against ignorance, old-established customs and deep-seated prejudices on the part of people. Cattle-owners, when disease is prevalent in a village, often remove their cattle to another locality, and it is difficult to make them realise that such action is the means of spreading disease. Until the cattle-owners themselves can be made to understand the importance of early information and immediate segregation, periodical outbreaks are destined to remain both a source of loss to them and a danger to agricultural interests in general. The brunt of the struggle against cattle disease is borne by the Indian Veterinary Service. There are more than 600 veterinary hospitals and dispensaries at work throughout the country, and the cases treated number more than one million annually. It is gratifying to note that the public in general is now taking an increasing interest in veterinary matters. Last year, for example, a Veterinary Hospital was built in Bombay with the help of popular subscription; and in the Punjab substantial assistance is received from the general public. The Imperial Bacteriological Laboratory at Muktesar, which supplies munition for the campaign against contagious cattle diseases, distributed nearly two million doses of serum and vaccine during the year under review. The research activities of the Laboratory into cattle diseases were developed upon an unprecedented scale, and much economically useful information is in consequence being acquired. The second session of the trial course for the training of Indians belonging to the Provincial Branch of the Veterinary Service, for promotion to the Imperial grade, was held during the year. It is believed that the results of the experiment justifies the contention that the advanced training required for entrance into the highest posts in the service can readily be given at the Muktesar Laboratory.

Cattle Diseases.

Veterinary Work.

The Muktesar Laboratory.

The need for supplementing the cattle power of the country has been felt for some time back; and it has now begun to strike those cultivators

who have grasped the significance of improved tillage in the scheme of general agricultural improvement. It is more and more realised that such crops of sugarcane depend for their yield quite as much upon a more extensive tillage as upon increased supply of manure and water. Accordingly, as a result of demonstrations held in certain places, much interest has of late been evinced in agricultural motor tractors. Experiments have been undertaken with a view to discovering the suitability of different types. So far, the results have not been particularly promising, for in several localities tractors have been found unfitted for deep ploughing; while the cost of the work per acre is beyond the means of all but the largest landowners. Moreover, the fact that in India fields are as a rule rather too small for tractor cultivation seems for the present to limit the possibility of progress in this direction; but where large stretches of land have gone out of cultivation tractor ploughing may well prove advantageous.

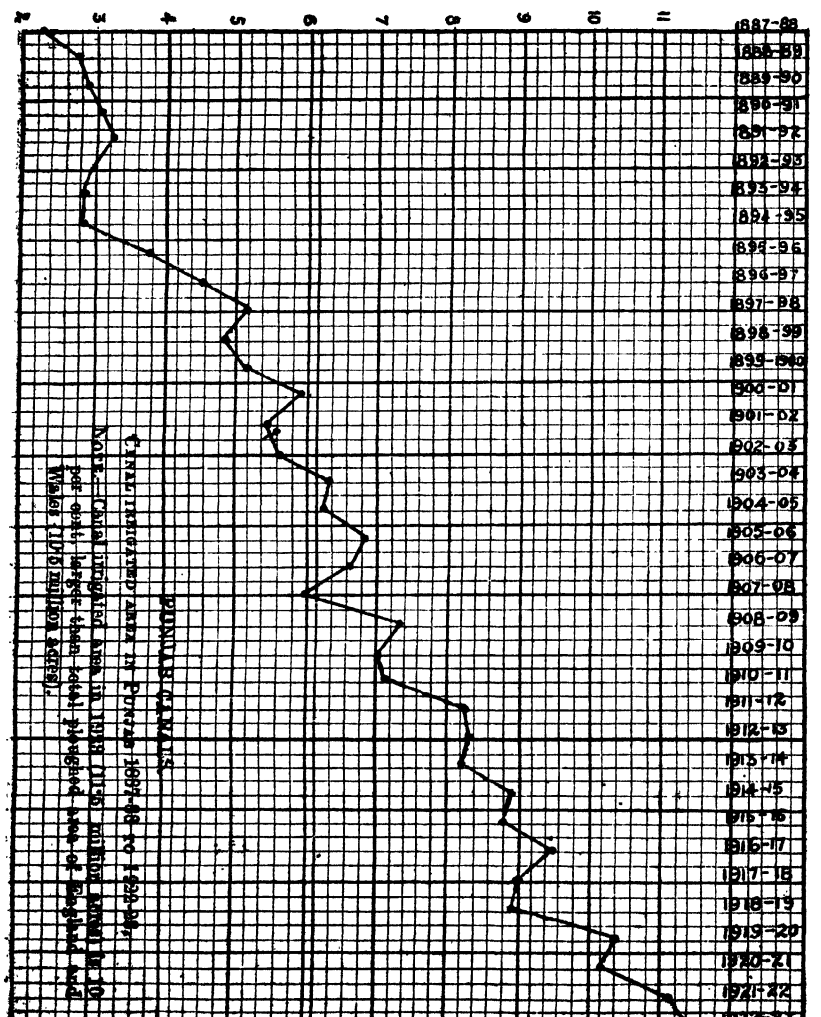
Tractor Cultivation.

It is obvious that to a very large extent the utility of the work of the various Agricultural Departments depends upon the effective diffusion of a knowledge of improved materials and better processes among the population of India. But such a task presents peculiar difficulties. The large majority of Indian cultivators being wholly illiterate, the methods of conveying information by leaflets, circulars and lectures, which are so effective in more advanced countries, here fail to produce the desired result. It is generally necessary to resort to ocular demonstration; and for this purpose, Government seed and demonstration farms, implement depots and the like, have been established. The most convenient means of convincing agriculturists that the suggested improvements are really practicable has been found to lie in the employment of small plots in their own fields for demonstration purposes. The question of bringing home to the Indian cultivator the value of the work done on his behalf by the Agricultural Departments, thus resolves itself very largely into the provision of adequate and properly trained touring staffs, organised on lines dictated by experience. Much assistance is, however, derived from the co-operative movement. In every Province, the Agricultural and the Co-operative Departments work hand in hand, and thereby succeed in bringing improved seed, better implements, and more advanced methods within the ken of the masses of the population. At the present moment, indeed, the co-operative organizations provide the main channel through which the results of the labours of the agricultural experts filter down to the cultivators themselves.

Demonstration.

DIAGRAM 11.

Growth of Canal Irrigation in the Punjab.



Prominent in the sum—total of the labour which has been devoted by the authorities to the improvement of Indian agriculture must be reckoned the achievements of the irrigation system. India may justly be proud of her progress along this line, in which she stands second to no other country. For a fuller and more adequate description of the irrigation system, reference may be had to the "Triennial Review of Irrigation" for 1918-1921. The paragraphs which here follow attempt nothing more than the barest outline of some of the more salient features.

Irrigation.

We may begin by noticing that in the Tropics, cultivation can be, and in many cases is, effected by natural rainfall only; but there are many regions in which the artificial watering of some portion at least of the crops is essential. In some parts of India, the rainfall of every season is insufficient to bring the crops to maturity; while in other parts it is liable to uneven distribution, or to such deficiency as to render the tract concerned famine-stricken in the absence of artificial protection. The Indian Irrigation Commission, which sat from 1901 to 1903, recorded that between the area in which the annual rainfall is invariably sufficient, and that in which it is so scanty that no agriculture at all is possible without an irrigation system, there lies a tract of nearly a million square miles which, without the aid of irrigation, is exposed to the uncertainty of the seasons and to the scourge of famine.

Necessity for Irrigation.

There are various methods by which irrigation is accomplished in India. A very large area is watered without assistance from Government by the cultivators themselves, the principal means employed being wells, tanks, and temporary obstructions to divert water from the streams on to the fields. Well irrigation is particularly important in India; and although exact figures regarding the number of wells, and the area irrigated from them are not available, it is known that as far back as twenty years ago there were approximately two and a half million wells irrigating some twelve and a quarter million acres. The capital invested in this form of irrigation is probably now not less than Rs. 100 crores. Almost every known system of raising water is simultaneously practised in India ranging from the primitive plan of hand-lifting to the modern device of power pumping, which, thanks to the efforts of Government engineers, is gradually growing more common. But the means principally employed is cattle power; and experiments made before the war show that in certain districts, where the wells average from 35 to 40 feet in depth,

Methods of Irrigation.

the cost of irrigation with cattle power was Rs. 70 per acre, at the prices which then prevailed, per annum. The field for the introduction of small power pumps of a standardised pattern is thus very great; for it is estimated that land now producing crops worth Rs. 15 to Rs. 30 per acre can easily be made to yield produce of much greater value when more efficient methods of water raising are available.

Government Irrigation Work.

Government irrigation works comprise both tanks and canals, the former being mainly small affairs which derive their importance from their vast numbers. For example in Madras alone, there are nearly 40,000 petty irrigation works, serving between 2½ and 3 million acres. Turning now to canals, we may notice that they are divided for convenience into two classes; those drawing their supplies from perennial rivers and those which depend upon water stored in artificial reservoirs. The former are mainly found in connection with rivers rising in the Himalayas,

Tanks and Canals.

the snow upon which acts as an inexhaustible source of supply during the dry months of the year. The latter are principally associated with the rivers rising in the Peninsula proper, where no such natural storage is available. Storage works are situated mainly in the Deccan, the Central Provinces, and in Bundelkhand. They range in size from small earthen embankments to enormous dams such as those now under construction in the Deccan, capable of impounding over 20,000 million cubic feet of water. Canals which draw their supplies from perennial rivers may again be divided into perennial and inundation canals. The former are provided with head-works, which enable water to be drawn from a river, irrespective of its natural level; some obstruction being placed in the bed so that the water may reach the height required to secure admission to the canal. Within this class fall the great perennial systems of the Punjab and the United Provinces. Inundation canals have no such means of control, and water only finds its way into them when the natural level of the river reaches the necessary height. The most important inundation canals in India are those of Sind; indeed, upon them depends the whole irrigation of the Province; but they also exist in the Punjab, drawing their supplies from the Indus and its tributaries.

Irrigation under the Reforms.

With the introduction of the Reforms, two important changes were introduced in the classification of Government irrigation works. In the first place, irrigation was given the status of a Provincial reserved subject; enhanced financial powers being delegated to local Governments in order to give them a

much freer hand than they had previously possessed, in respect of all but the most important projects. Only those works estimated to cost over Rs. 50 lakhs now come before the Government of India for submission to the Secretary of State. In the second place, the old and somewhat cumbersome classification of individual works was abandoned ; and all are now classified as either productive or unproductive. Productive works are such as satisfy the condition that within ten years of their completion they produce sufficient revenue to cover their working expenses and the interest charges on their capital cost. All other works are classified as unproductive.

Irrigation in 1922-23.

During the year 1922-23 the total area under irrigation, excluding Indian States, amounted to some 28⅓ million acres. This represented 13% of the entire cropped area of the country, and was about a quarter of a million acres more than the previous record of 28·1 million acres irrigated in 1919-20. The total length of main and branch canals and distributaries in operation amounted to some 67,000 miles ; while the estimated value of the crops supplied with water from Government works was Rs. 143¾ crores. The area irrigated was largest in the Punjab, where it extended to about 10⅔ million acres during the year. This figure constituted another record, being a quarter of a million acres in excess of the previous maximum of 1921-22. In addition to the area thus mentioned, 728,000 acres were irrigated from channels, which, although drawing their supplies from British canals, lie wholly in the Indian States. Next among the Indian Provinces came the Madras Presidency, with an area of 7⅓ million acres ; followed by Sind with 3⅔ million acres, and the United Provinces with 2⅔ million acres. The total capital outlay on irrigation and navigation works, including works under construction, amounted at the end of the year 1922-23 to Rs. 84 crores. The gross revenue was Rs. 10 crores, and the working expenses Rs. 3·9 crores ; the net return on capital is therefore 7·3%.

New Projects.

We may now briefly describe certain new projects under construction. Certain alterations have been made in the important Sarda-Kichha feeder project. The circumstances in which this scheme was prepared rendered it certain that very considerable changes in the projected alignment would be necessary before the work of construction could be taken in hand. The original proposal for utilising the water of the Sarda contemplated a diversion into the Ganges River above Narora at the headworks of the Lower Ganges Canal, thereby giving a large additional supply to the Ganges

and Agra canal systems. The project provided also for a separate feeder from the Ganges Canal to supplement the supplies of the Eastern and Western Jumna Canals. The principal item was a great feeder canal from the Sarda to the Ganges, which would have traversed at right angles the whole of the drainage of the sub-montane tract between the two rivers. This scheme was abandoned in favour of a canal which would provide irrigation to the north-western districts of Oudh, with only a comparatively small branch for the irrigation of Rohilkhand. It was considered advisable to prepare a project for this branch in advance of that for the whole Oudh scheme. The project was designed to take up the irrigation which under the earlier proposal would have been effected by the first forty miles of the Sarda Ganges feeder. It has now been found possible to carry the whole volume of water further to the South, thus avoiding the malaria-ridden portion of the Tarai through which the original alignment ran. Great economy has thereby been effected, and it is now believed that the work will be completed within the amount estimated when the project was first framed in 1914, despite the great increase in rates which has taken place since that time. The saving is further expected to cover the cost of substituting a barrage for a solid weir at the head of the canal.

Sarda-Kichha and Sarda Canals.

The Sarda-Oudh Canal takes off at the seventh mile of the Sarda-Kichha feeder. The Sarda Canal project consists of a main canal, with a length of 17½ miles, after which it divides into three branches. From these branches a network of distributaries will emerge. There are to be 478 miles of main canal and branches; 3,370 miles of distributaries, and 100 miles of escapes. The canal will irrigate nearly 1·4 million acres, and produce a return of 7½% on the estimated capital cost of £7½ millions. The operations carried out up to the end of 1922-23 have involved an expenditure of Rs. 116 lakhs.

Sarda-Oudh Canal.

There are on either bank of the Sutlej, in British territory on the North, and in Bahawalpur territory on the South, a long series of inundation canals, which draw their supply from the river whenever the water supply is high enough to permit it. These canals are liable to all the drawbacks of irrigation by inundation. There are no weirs at their heads and in many cases no means of controlling the volumes entering them; consequently while the water supply is assured during the monsoon months of a normal year, it is liable to serious fluctuation according to the seasonal condi-

Sutlej Valley Canals.

tions. In a year of inferior rainfall, little water enters the canals; in a year of heavy rainfall, they are liable to grave damage by flood.

It is *inter alia* to remedy this state of affairs that the Sutlej Valley project has been framed. This will afford the existing canals an assured and controlled supply from April to October; it will enable their scope to be extended so as to embrace the whole low-lying area in the river valley; it will afford perennial irrigation to the uplands on both banks, which are at present entirely unirrigated, and owing to the low rainfall waste. The project consists of four weirs, three on the Sutlej, and one on the combined Sutlej and Chenab, with twelve canals taking off from above them. This multiplicity of canals and weirs seems a peculiar feature of the scheme, until it is realised that the project consists of four inter-connected systems, each of the first magnitude. The canals are designed to utilise 48,500 cubic feet of water per second during the hot weather and the monsoon, and 7,000 cubic feet a second during the cold weather. Over 5 million acres will be irrigated, of which 2 million will be in the Punjab, 2·8 million in Bahawalpur, and 0·35 million in Bikaner. The real value of the project will be appreciated from the statement that as a result of it, 3¾ million acres of desert waste will become available for cultivation. The scheme, which received the sanction of the Secretary of State in December 1921 is progressing well; and up to the end of 1922-23, Rs. 166 lakhs had been spent upon it.

Sukkur Barrage.

The Sukkur-Lloyd Barrage project in Sind, which is the greatest irrigation scheme now under construction, was finally sanctioned by the Secretary of State in 1923. Its object is to give an assured supply to, and extend, the irrigation now effected by the numerous inundation canals in Sind, which draw their water from the Indus. This will be achieved by the construction of a barrage, nearly a mile long between abutments, across the Indus; which will be by far the biggest work of its kind yet built. From above the barrage, seven canals will take off, irrigating over 5 million acres, of which 2 million comprise existing inundation irrigation, to which an assured supply will be given, while the remainder is at present entirely uncultivated. The cost of the scheme will be about £18 millions.

Future Programme.

The Cauvery reservoir project in Madras, and two great irrigation schemes in the Punjab, have not yet progressed beyond the stage of examination. Almost every Province has several schemes under investigation which are not yet ripe for sanction; but it is interesting to note that if only those

projects which are likely to be constructed within a reasonable time are reckoned, an addition of over 6 million acres or the total area under irrigation will result. As we have already noticed, the record area irrigated by Government works was attained during the year 1922-23, when it extended to above 29 million acres. By the time the projects now under construction are in full working order, a total of 40 million acres is confidently anticipated. When allowance is made for the more promising projects now being considered, and for the natural expansion of existing schemes, an ultimate area of 50 million acres is by no means improbable.

It will be apparent from the preceding pages that the Indian irrigation system, despite the scope which exists for its future expansion, is already highly developed ; unfortunately the same cannot be said of certain other activities designed for the development of natural resources. Among those forms of latent wealth which would unquestionably yield excellent results to intensive exploitation, forests and fisheries may be selected for a brief review.

Forests.

The injury which has been inflicted upon many countries by the destruction of forests is a commonplace ; and India has escaped none of the penalties which arise from the neglect of this branch of her natural resources. The forests in the plains which once provided a hunting ground for the Mughal emperors have mostly disappeared ; and the land they once occupied has either come under cultivation, or now stands as a deserted tract with ever increasing ravines. On the hill sides the blind destruction of forests has brought many serious consequences . After denudation, water pours down from the hills with great force, since the trees no longer discharge their function of storing water and doling it out gradually. The fertile surface soil is swept away together with the vegetation, and deep ravines are formed. The process of deforestation has probably been going on for many centuries ; though only in recent times has it attracted much attention. When under British rule the necessity for forest conservation became apparent, the evil had proceeded very far. Among its most serious economic consequences may be mentioned the necessity, now imposed on the population of northern India, of seeking their fuel supply elsewhere than from brushwood. Owing to the lack of suitable wood, the greater part of the animal manure of Hindustan has to be burned as fuel. The land is therefore very largely deprived of the resources which properly pertain to it, with profound and disastrous effects upon the husbandry of the whole country.

These broad national aspects of forestry are still hardly appreciated in India; for much work still remains to be done in educating the public to a proper realization of the value of India's forests as a commercial asset. Indeed, there is some reason to apprehend that the Forest Departments may find themselves in conflict with public opinion. The restrictions upon the grazing of cattle, the felling of trees, and the lighting of fires, which are so necessary for the protection of the interests of future generations, are frequently most unpopular among those classes of the population whose activities are thereby restrained. Particularly during the days of the non-co-operation movement, was the work of the various Forest Departments gravely hampered. Incendiarism, grazing and lopping assumed proportions hitherto unknown. At the same time, the friction which resulted between the Forest Department and certain sections of the general public led to agitation of various kinds. In consequence, the attention of Government has lately been specially devoted to endeavours to convince both the educated and the uneducated classes of the importance of forest conservancy. Special care has also been taken to differentiate between real and fictitious grounds of complaint; and to relax the rigour of forest restrictions in such a manner as to meet the requirements of villagers without prejudice to the interest of the future. In several provinces, forest committees have been organised with the object of justifying, and enlisting public opinion in support of the measures required for forest conservation. Good progress has also been made in the system of handing over to panchayats the management of the smaller reserves which are chiefly valuable for the supply of grazing for local cattle. In the United Provinces, where there was considerable agitation against the forest policy of Government in Kumaon, a standing committee of the Legislative Council has been appointed for the purpose of dispelling misconception and fostering co-operation between the Forest Department and the public. A special enquiry was also held into the grievances of the Kumaon villagers, with the result that certain modifications of the existing system have been successfully carried into effect.

Forest Conservation and Public Opinion.

Forest Conservation and Public Opinion.

Despite the not unnatural difficulty of securing the cordial co-operation of the general public and the additional disadvantages of shortage of staff and financial stringency, Indian forests yield a considerable revenue to the State. In the year 1920-21, the latest date for which complete figures are available,

Forests Pay.

the surplus of revenue under this heading amounted to Rs. 1·77 crores. In considering this result it must be remembered that out of a total forest area of more than a quarter of a million square miles, less than 60,000 square miles have at present been brought under regular scientific management as prescribed by working plans. An immense scope thus exists for expansion in the future. Already there are signs of the beginning of a new era. The increased demand for timber and other forest products characteristic of the post-War years has undoubtedly stimulated forest exploitation throughout India. The Provincial Governments have now completed in the main the reorganization of staff required for developments in the immediate future. The sanctioned strength of the Indian Forest Service is now 399 officers; of which number 353 are to be recruited directly, and the balance obtained by promotion from the Provincial Forest Service. As an index of the success of the popular demand for the Indianisation of the service, it may be mentioned that out of a total of 14 probationers, recruited in 1923-5 were Indians and the remainder Europeans. At the end of this year the strength of the directly recruited cadre was 305, while 38 probationers were under training in Great Britain. We may here note that the place at which the probationers for the Indian Forest Service will be trained in future is still under consideration.

The Forest Service and Indianisation.

Among the most important lines of future development may be mentioned that of forest engineering. Much valuable work has already been accomplished; and a special Forest Engineering Service consisting of 17 officers is now in existence. But in this, as in other directions, progress is severely handicapped by financial stringency, as well as by the lack of any system of providing funds for considerable capital expenditure, no matter how heavy the returns may be. How much remains to be done from the point of view of exploitation is indicated by the fact that the outturn of timber and firewood from all sources amounted in 1920-21 to just under 300 million cubic feet, representing only about 2 cubic feet per acre from all classes of forests. Under more intensive systems of development, and with the aid of more up-to-date methods of extraction, this yield could be greatly increased. The need of a book on forest engineering suitable for use as a text book at the Forest College at Dehra Dun has long been felt; and sanction has now been given to the preparation of a manual which will be useful not only as a text-book, but also as a work of reference.

Forest Engineering.

Of recent years, a certain progress has been made in establishing and consolidating definite relations with the commercial world. The possibility of utilising bamboos for paper pulp has now been demonstrated; and the number of firms to whom concessions have been granted for this purpose has increased. This fact is of considerable importance from the general standpoint of India's industries; for there can be little doubt that extensive forest areas of bamboo and Savannah grass could be utilised for the local manufacture of a large proportion of the paper and paste-board now imported from other countries. Further, large private concerns are now undertaking the extraction of timber, the manufacture of ply-wood, and the like, on long term leases. There is great scope for development in this direction; for India, despite her quarter of a million of square miles of forest, still imports wood, and articles made of wood, from other countries. Moreover, much is hoped from the introduction in the World's market of Indian timbers; some of which, though at present but little known, possess high commercial value.

Exploitation.

Minor forest industries are also of growing importance; although the small scale on which they are at present established renders their results liable to fluctuation, from the financial standpoint, from year to year. In the United Provinces, as elsewhere, the policy regarding the Utilisation Circle includes the maintenance of model institutions employing the most up-to-date machinery and imparting instruction in the latest methods of work. Important work is being carried on in the Central Wood-working Institute at Bareilly. Experiments are being conducted in the seasoning of timber; and modern machinery has been installed for the use of apprentices. A rosin and turpentine factory has been established, with the result that the rosin industry is now on a commercial footing. The factory, together with the saw-mill and turnery, has been made over to syndicates, who will float them as limited companies in which shares will be held by Government.

Minor Industries.

Side by side with conservation and exploitation, must go research into forest economics. The Industrial Commission, to whose report reference has already been made, considered that the Forest Research Institute of Dehra Dun did not possess an equipment sufficient to meet the calls made upon it. As a result of this recommendation, a general scheme for the enlargement of the Institute was sanctioned. But before it could be put

Research.

into full effect, a period of financial stringency developed, which, combined with the "axe" of the Inchcape Committee, has considerably restricted the available funds. During the course of the period under review, fair progress was none the less made in many important investigations. The specialists in wood technology, timber seasoning and testing, wood-making and pulp and paper-making, who had been engaged in 1921 from England and America for short periods, were either re-engaged or succeeded by others appointed on similar agreements. The American specialist in charge of wood technology left the Institute; but the Government of India, subject to the approval of the Legislative Assembly, decided to enter into an agreement with him by which he will write a text-book on the technology of Indian timbers, and will train an Indian in America with the idea of fitting him for eventual employment as wood technologist. On account of the financial stringency above referred to, it has not been found possible to make rapid progress with the construction of the new Research Institute. But the economic workshops are practically completed, and were functioning at the close of the year; and every effort is being made to push on with the scheme as quickly as funds will permit. The total expenditure devoted to this end up to the end of March 1924 amounted to about Rs. 40 lakhs.

The Forest Research Institute.

In her fisheries also, India possesses considerable national wealth, to which attention was prominently directed by the Indian Industrial Commission. In many parts of India the consumption of fish in cities and towns within reasonable distance of the sea, is both considerable and steadily increasing. For example, the total importations of fish into Calcutta have steadily advanced from 346,378 maunds of 82 lbs. in 1917 to 417,684 maunds in 1921-22 and 435,194 maunds in 1922-23. The supply is still far short of the demand. To meet it continuous and ruthless fishing is carried on throughout the year—fishing which includes even spawn and fry. There is every reason to fear that unless legislation can be introduced for the enforcement of a close season, the local fisheries of Bengal will soon become seriously depleted. The first necessity of the situation is the spread of sound ideas among the fishermen, who are at present of low caste, ignorant and uneducated. But persistent propaganda carried on by the Bengal Department of Fisheries, prior to its abolition on grounds of economy, has removed to an encouraging extent the apathy and the

Fisheries.

Bengal.

conservatism of the fishing classes. Satisfactory progress is being made in the organization of co-operative societies for the leasing of fisheries, and for the spread of primary education by means of special schools. In Madras, where the Fisheries Department has been long established, the year under review was particularly satisfactory. While the Department is not intended primarily for the production of revenue, the financial results obtained are gratifying testimony to the success of its working. The important revenue earning sections realised a profit of Rs. 76,000 ; and the total expenditure of the Department, in which is included a large sum spent on the education of fisher children and on socio-economic work among the fisher folk, exceeded the receipts only by Rs. 16,000. The Government Fish Canneries showed a satisfactory increase both in output and in sales. The Tanur Experimental Station extended its operations in the preparation of fish meal, which during the year under review could be sold at the very low rate of 2 annas a lb. The Pearl and Chank Fisheries Section also operated at a profit ; and as the result of an extensive pearl bank inspection, promising prospects have been revealed of a successful pearl fishery in 1926, or 1927. Equally satisfactory results were obtained from the inland piscicultural operations, and valuable work was done in stocking the waters under the control of the Department with fish of various species. Temperance and social work occupied a large share of the attention of the Department. The Fisheries Training Institute and the elementary schools continued to do useful work ; while the number of fishermen's co-operative societies showed an increase. In the Punjab, where the Fisheries Department is of more recent growth, its position is not so well established, but it has already made a fair start on the road to financial independence. Here, as elsewhere, the well-being of the fishermen is one of the most important objects of the Department, whose aim it is to secure willing assistance in the fish conservation designed as much for the benefit of the fishermen themselves as of the community at large. Given sufficient staff to enforce the rules, and to ensure proper conservation, the benefit to the food resources of the Province, through the operations of the Department, would be incalculable. So far, the attempt to introduce co-operative methods among the fishermen has been somewhat of a failure, owing to the uncertainty about the ownership of backwaters in which most of the fishing of the Province is done. The right of fishermen to pursue their trade in these waters has been challenged by the landowners. The trouble

Madras.

The Punjab.

at one time promised to be serious; but disputes were averted by tactful handling on the part of local departmental officials.

In the preceding pages, we have briefly reviewed the course of India's economic life during the year 1923-24, and the progress which has been accomplished in the development of her natural resources. It now remains to describe the condition of what is perhaps the most indispensable of all requisites to her prosperity—her system of communications. The whole question is attended with special difficulties. Quite apart from the enormous distances which must be traversed, and the natural obstacles to be overcome in passing from one region of the Indian sub-continent to another, the internal communications, even of a restricted area, frequently break down altogether in the rainy season. Floods are of frequent occurrence; even trunk roads and railways are cut; while quite important market towns find themselves entirely isolated from the neighbouring districts. This state of affairs is an old story in India. Throughout the whole of her history, difficulties of communication have exercised a preponderating influence upon her political as well as upon her industrial condition; and they still persist, despite railways, telegraphs motor transport and other expedients undreamt of in former times, as a formidable obstacle to the progress of commercial development. Unceasing efforts, combined with expenditure upon a scale hitherto impossible, must be devoted to the task of bringing the road and rail communications of India up to the requirements of to-day. During the period now under review the utilisation of mechanical transport for military and other purposes has continued to develop, but its employment depends, like that of humbler means of communication, upon increasing improvements in the road system.

Communications.

The necessity for extending India's roads is becoming every day more apparent. At present the economic loss caused by the inaccessability of many agricultural districts in the rainy season is very considerable; and this cannot be remedied until the system of trunk roads is fairly developed. The progress which is being made year by year is inadequate for the necessities of the country. The total mileage of metal and unmetalled roads maintained by public authority is still only about 216,000. The matter should receive close and early attention, and public interest must be aroused to its importance.

Roads.

Of all the means of communication in modern India, the most important is the railway system. A study of the map on the opposite page

DIAGRAM 12.

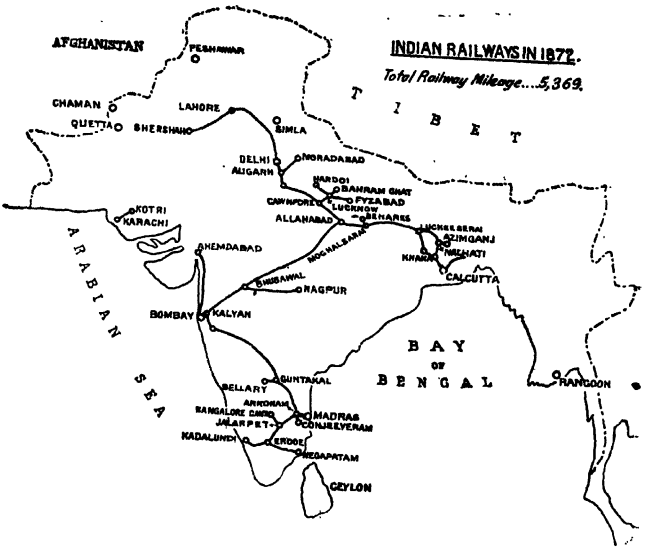
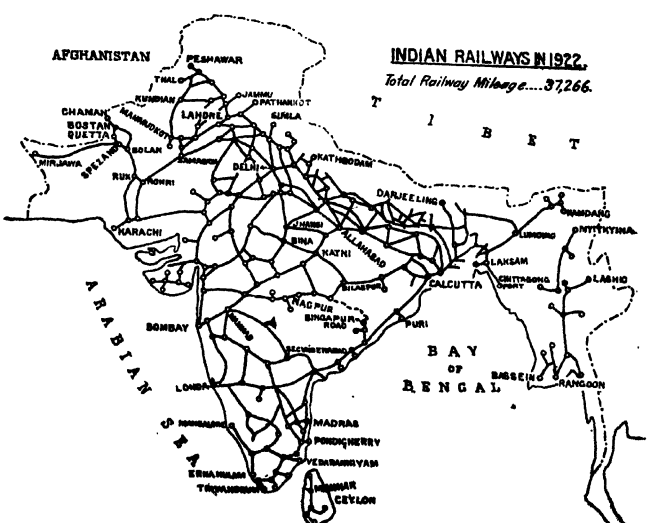


DIAGRAM 13.



Railways.

will illustrate the remarkable development which has taken place in the course of the half century since 1882. In that year, the total railway mileage amounted to only 5,369 miles. By the end of the year 1922-23, it had expanded to 37,618 miles, and in the last two decades the net gain to Government from the working of all railways has aggregated more than Rs. 100 crores.

Financial Results.

During 1921-22, as we noticed in the last Statement, the railways fell from the status of an important source of revenue to the position of a heavy liability. We noticed that owing to the unprecedented rise in working expenses, and the slump in trade, the receipts to Government in that year amounted to Rs. 81·94 crores, while the total charges worked out to Rs. 91·21 crores. Fortunately, during the year 1922-23, the position again became satisfactory; the net gain to Government after providing for interest, annuity, and other similar charges, being Rs. 1·22 crores. The total gross earnings of all railways in India amounted to Rs. 105·65 crores, as compared with Rs. 92·89 crores in 1921-22. These figures, however, include railways owned by Indian States and companies for which the Government of India has no direct responsibility. The receipts to Government for the year 1922-23 showed the considerable rise of about Rs. 11½ crores in comparison with the figures of the previous year. This was due to a certain extent to an increase in passenger fares and goods rates. But it is symptomatic of a reviving commercial prosperity of the country, that there was also an increase of 6½ million tons in the commodities carried; while the number of third-class passengers rose from 500·5 millions to 502·9 millions. It is however interesting to notice that this was accompanied by a considerable falling off in the number of upper class passengers carried.

Retrenchment.

The Railway Department, as the largest spending department of the Central Administration, naturally received considerable attention from the Retrenchment Committee presided over by Lord Inchcape. The Committee was of opinion that India could not afford to subsidise the railways; and that steps should be taken to curtail operating expenses in order to ensure both that the railways as a whole should exist on a self-supporting basis; and that an adequate return should be obtained for the large capital expenditure incurred by Government. They considered that a fair return would be 5½ per cent. In this connection it is interesting to notice that at the close of the year 1922-23 the percentage of net earnings

on total capital outlay amounted to 4·88 per cent. The main recommendations in regard to the reduction of working expenses were adopted in the Budget for the year 1923-24; and immediate steps were taken by the Railway Board to make this reduction effective.

Administration.

The machinery by which the Government of India supervises the railway system has been frequently under review in the past. It should be remembered that Government directly controls the three State worked lines aggregating more than 9,000 miles; that it is the representative of the predominant owning partner in lines aggregating just under 23,000 miles, and that it is the guarantor of many of the smaller companies. It also exercises statutory authority over all the railways in India. In the discharge of these functions, the Government of India operates through the Railway Department; and the evolution of a satisfactory machinery of administration has proved extremely difficult. As a result of the deliberations of a Committee presided over by Sir William Acworth, various important changes have been introduced into the system of organization hitherto prevailing. A Chief Commissioner of Railways has been appointed, who is solely responsible under the Government of India for arriving at decisions on technical matters, and for advising Government on matters of railway policy. He is not, as was the former President of the Railway Board, liable to be outvoted and overruled by his colleagues. A detailed reorganization of the Board in accordance with the Chief Commissioner's proposals is under the consideration of Government; but two important changes have already taken place. One is the appointment of a Financial Commissioner; the other the appointment of a Chief Mechanical Engineer. Among other important consequences of the Acworth Committee's recommendations, mention may be made of the preparation of a programme of capital expenditure amounting to Rs. 150 crores during the next five years. This proposal, which was put forward by a committee of the Legislature after a consideration of the Acworth Report, has been accepted by the Government of India and by the Secretary of State. It was originally intended that this sum should be devoted to the rehabilitation and improvement of existing lines, to the completion of lines already under construction, and to the improvement of travelling conditions of third-class passengers. But the further continued fall in the prices of railway material, coupled with insistence by the Railway Board on more adequate financial justification for the proposals of railway administrations, have resulted in a

careful reconsideration of the possibility of new railway construction

Developments.

While no final decision has yet been arrived at, steps have been taken to push on with the investigation of more urgent projects. In view of the pressing need of railway development in Southern India, the requirements of that part of the country have formed the subject of the special attention. As the result of an examination recently carried out, it has been decided to undertake the construction of two chord lines, and a branch line; as well as to proceed with a detailed investigation of a number of other projects. Second among the more far-reaching proposals which have recently been put forward in connection with railway development may be mentioned the separation of railway finance from the general finances of the country. The Acworth Committee had pointed out that the annual allotments for railway expenditure had been determined from year to year less with a view to the actual requirement of the Indian railways, than to the general financial position of India. The unhappy results of this arrangement were very forcibly demonstrated in their Report. The Legislative Assembly, when the proposal was brought before them in the first instance, reserved their opinion. But the project has recently received the official endorsement of the authorities; and the Budget of the year 1924-25 was actually framed on the assumption that the separation would be sanctioned. In the Delhi Session of 1924, the Legislative Assembly same to no conclusion; and it was resolved that the final consideration of this important matter should be deferred until September.

During the period under review, the press and public of India have continued to manifest great interest in railway administration. This

Railways and the Public.

was reflected in the transactions of the Legislature. In the September Session of 1922, and the January—March Session of 1923, no fewer than 547 question were asked concerning railway matters. Public criticism of the shortcomings of the railways has also been lively. The complaints most frequently made against them are overcrowding; the travelling conditions of third-class passengers; uncivil treatment of passengers by the railway staff; and the difficulty of securing compensation for goods lost or damaged in transit. Towards the remedying of these defects

Overcrowding.

the various railways administrations are directing considerable attention. The problem of overcrowding is particularly serious. As a result of difficulties connected with the War period, Indian railways are still insufficiently equip-

ped to enable them to deal satisfactorily with all the traffic that has to be carried. The direct remedy is obviously to obtain more stock; and during 1922-23, there were additions of 82 locomotives, 540 coaching vehicles, and 5,461 goods vehicles. But unfortunately the problem of overcrowding cannot be overcome by this means alone. It is useless to equip railways with a liberal supply of stock, unless provision is simultaneously made to increase the engine power and to improve the capacity of the line in such fashion as to enable extra trains to be run. It is in this respect that the most formidable difficulties are encountered. Wherever a railway line is single, the number of trains which can be passed over it is strictly limited. Wherever gradients are heavy, there is an obvious restriction on the load of the trains. While platforms are short and yards inadequate, trains longer than those at present running cannot be accommodated. Every possible effort is being made to deal with these difficulties, which from their very nature are not easy to remove. Already important terminal stations on several railways are being remodelled. The doubling of lines is being pursued; crossing stations are being provided; suburban lines are being electrified to prevent local congestion. At the same time, efforts are being made to redress and remove the grievances of third-class passengers. Waiting accommodation and booking facilities are being improved; the water supply is being properly regulated; and conveniences in the carriages themselves are being ameliorated in all new constructions. The supply of food for passengers is being carefully investigated and special refreshment rooms are being provided at important stations. Indian Passenger Superintendents are being appointed on various lines, whose sole duty it is to look after third-class passengers and to give them information and assistance. The activities of the Railway Department in this direction have unquestionably been stimulated through the unceasing interest displayed by the Legislative Assembly. Unfortunately, many of the definite schemes of improvement which have been briefly described, have been affected adversely as a result of the economies necessitated by the Retrenchment Committee's Report. The grievances of third-class passengers are none the less the object of sustained anxiety on the part of railway administrations; and the task of remedying them is now rendered easier by the constitution of Local Advisory Councils in connection with each large railway. This step was recommended by the Acworth Committee. Institutions working on something

The Problem of the 3rd class passenger.

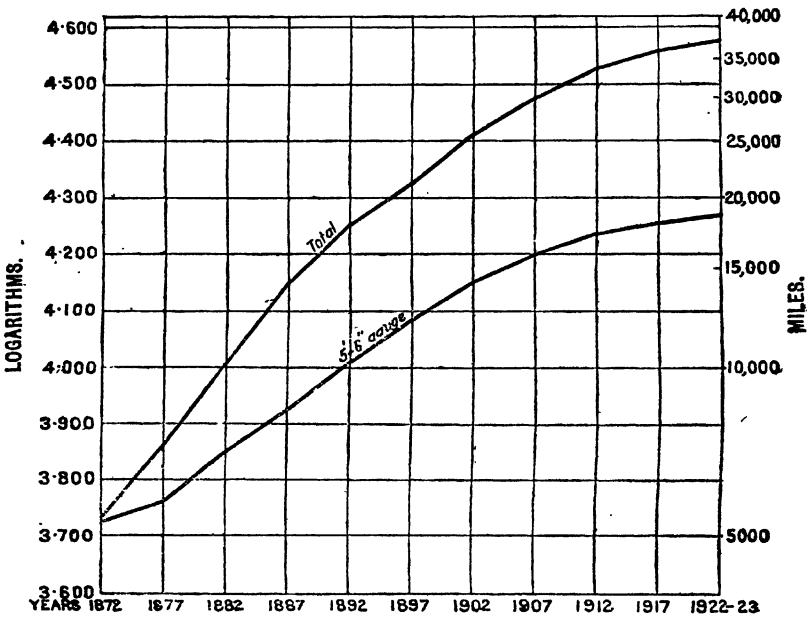
Local Advisory Councils.

DIAGRAM 14.

INCREASE IN MILEAGE OF INDIAN RAILWAYS.

(AT INTERVALS OF 5 YEARS.)

LOGARITHMIC SCALE.



Mileages of Indian Railways by gauges on 31. 12. 1872 and at the end of every subsequent period of 5 years.

like the proposed lines were already in existence in connection with certain railways; but the Committee desired to extend their scope and to press for the adoption of similar measures in respect of other large railway administrations. As a result of consideration by the Central Advisory Council, formed of selected members of the Indian Legislature, orders have been issued for the information of Local Advisory Committees on the more important railways. These bodies have been found useful in helping the Agents of Railways to keep in touch with public opinion; and in bringing to light the difficulties experienced by certain classes of those who travel.

Attention has also been directed to methods of safeguarding the interests both of the railways and of the general public in regard to compensation for loss and damage of goods in transit. During the year under review, a noticeable advance was made both in the methods of preventing theft and in more expeditious settlement of claims. Schemes have been introduced for the reorganization of watch and ward, and for various forms of securing the doors of goods wagons. As we noticed last year, a committee of the Legislature was appointed to report on the revision of railway risk note forms. The recommendations of this committee involved considerable changes, which aimed chiefly at imposing on the railways the onus of proof in cases where losses appeared to be due to misconduct on the part of the railway staff. The revised forms were referred to local governments, railway administrations and chambers of commerce for the expression of views, and their introduction is under the consideration of Government.

Railway Risk Notes.

Two other topics of general interest in connection with Indian railways may briefly be mentioned. The first concerns railway materials. A study of the figures of imported and indigenous materials purchased by the Indian railways in 1922-23 shows that the imported materials were valued at Rs. 21·69 crores, while indigenous materials only amounted to Rs. 9·17 crores. It is interesting to notice that of the imported materials, nearly Rs. 10 crores is represented by rolling stock. Until a few years ago India's capacity to supply this item was practically negligible; and is still regrettably small. But during 1922 the first articulated carriage built in India was erected at the Matunga shops of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway; while in the metre gauge carriage and wagon shops at Ajmere on the Bombay, Baroda and Central Indian Railway, facilities exist for the construction of engines and passengers and goods

Railway Materials.

vehicles entirely from raw materials. There has been a widely expressed desire among the Indian public that the opportunity afforded by the decision of Government to spend a sum of Rs. 150 crores on rehabilitation and improvement during the next quinquennium, should be utilised for the encouragement of railway industries in India; and as mentioned in last year's statement, a Railway Industries Committee was appointed on the recommendation of the Indian Legislature to advise Government in this matter. Progress in the desired direction is not entirely free from difficulty. The consideration that railways should buy their material in the cheapest market cannot, in deference to the tax-payer, be left out of account. Prices in England and elsewhere are falling rapidly, and if Indian-made materials are to take the place of supplies from abroad, they will have to keep pace. It seems unlikely that for the present at least, Indian manufacturers will be able to compete successfully with firms abroad. It is however important that the country should become gradually more independent of foreign sources of supply, if there is to be any reduction of the regrettably large amount of capital now locked up in stores. During the year under review, the Railway Department took up the question of reducing these balances, the figure of which was unfavourably commented upon by the Retrenchment Committee. At the present time the whole matter is under the examination of the Financial Commissioner.

Indianisation.

The second topic of which mention may be made is the progress achieved in satisfying the demand, constantly put forward in the public press, for the Indianisation of the superior ranks of the Railway Services. At the end of the year 1922-23 there were 753,472 railway employees, of whom 734,391 were Indians, 12,201 Anglo-Indians and 6,880 Europeans. The Legislature has displayed great interest in urging upon the authorities measures to enable Indians to fit themselves for railway appointments. In the Resolution adopted in the Legislative Assembly in February 1923, particular attention was directed to the case of traffic inspectors. Railway administrations have now been called upon to make special endeavours to recruit and train Indians with a view to their becoming qualified for advancement to these posts. They have also been instructed to bear in mind the policy recommended by the Assembly, namely that in the matter of recruitment, the claims of all communities and provinces should be taken under consideration. On the State worked railways, the figures for the year under review show a considerable advance in the matter of Indianisation. Indians now comprise 24

per cent. of the engineer (officers) establishment, 29 per cent. of the superior traffic establishment and 15 per cent. of the superior stores establishment. The corresponding percentages for 1921-22 were 20 per cent., 25 per cent and 8 per cent respectively. One of the difficulties in recruiting Indians for the superior cadres on the railway staffs is due to a lack of facilities for proper training. Extensive schemes are, however, at present under the consideration of the authorities. As a result of the investigation of a special officer, detailed recommendations for the selection and training of officers and subordinates of the traffic, civil, and mechanical engineering departments, have now been put forward. Measures have been taken, in some cases, with the assistance of local Governments, to improve existing facilities for training, particularly in the direction of mechanical engineering. It is hoped that these arrangements to meet the need of indigenous recruits for the railway service will be made more and more effective as the years pass.

State vs. Company Management.

There can be little doubt that the demands put forward by various sections of Indian political opinion for the modification in certain directions of railway policy, lie at the root of the feelings, noted in last year's statement, in favour of State as opposed to Company Management. The Acworth Committee, it may be mentioned, was divided upon this matter. But Indian political opinion is practically unanimous. Last year, the question was fully discussed in the Legislature ; and it became clear in the course of the debates that political considerations were exercising a great influence upon certain representatives of Indian opinion. The accusation was freely made that the railway policy hitherto pursued had been inimical to Indian interests, and in favour of those of British manufacturers and British traders. Point was lent to the discussion by the fact that the existing East Indian Railway contract terminates on December 31st, 1924, and that of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway on the 30th June 1925. The Legislative Assembly carried a resolution recommending that both these railways should be taken under State management at the termination of their present contracts. The Government of India desired to leave the door open for handing over the management of one or other railway to an indigenous company, calculated to exemplify the benefits of company management as generally understood. This view was not however accepted by the Legislature ; and arrangements have been instituted for bringing both railways under State management at the termination of their contracts.

Indian railways, like other means of communication, suffer considerably from the damage inflicted by floods during the rainy season.

Damage from Floods.

This was particularly the case during 1923, when bridges were carried away, lines were breached, and traffic seriously interrupted. In November 1923 a severe cyclone, the worst ever experienced in this area, struck the East Coast Section of the Bengal Nagpur Railway in the neighbourhood of Waltair. The main line was rendered impassable for a distance of 170 miles; the embankment being washed away in many places, bridges entirely demolished, and long lengths of permanent way carried off by the floods. It is estimated that the necessary repairs will cost no less than Rs. 23 lakhs. Temporary repairs, sufficient to pass all classes of traffic, were completed in a little more than five weeks, but they cannot be expected to stand the strain of the monsoon.

Next in order of importance in the system of Indian communications, may be mentioned Posts and Telegraphs. During the year 1922-23

The Post Office.

for the first time since 1880, there was a setback in the growth of postal traffic. Instead of an increase, such as had been experienced for so many years, the total number of postal articles handled declined from 1,422 to 1,186 millions. The biggest decrease was under the heads letters and postcards. This was due partly to trade depression, and partly to an increase in the postal rates.

It was pointed out in last year's Statement that owing to the largely increased cost of all services, the Post Office was quite unable to pay

Financial Difficulties.

its way at the then existing rates. Since 1917, the working expenses of the Department had increased from Rs. 3·54 crores to Rs. 6·29 crores; and it became plain that unless drastic measures could be taken, a heavy annual loss would have to be faced. The Indian rates were indeed extraordinarily low; the initial Indian letter postage was exactly one-third of the initial letter-postage in England, while the average distance over which mails are conveyed in India is about five times as great as the average distance in England. Accordingly, in spring of 1922, the Legislative Assembly increased the initial rates on letters from ½ to 1 anna, and on

Enhancement of Rates.

postcards from ¼ to ½ anna. The new rates of postage were estimated to give an extra revenue of over one crore; but owing to the very heavy drop in the volume of the mail, the actual enhancement realised was some Rs. 80 lakhs. The immediate effect of the increased rates of postage which

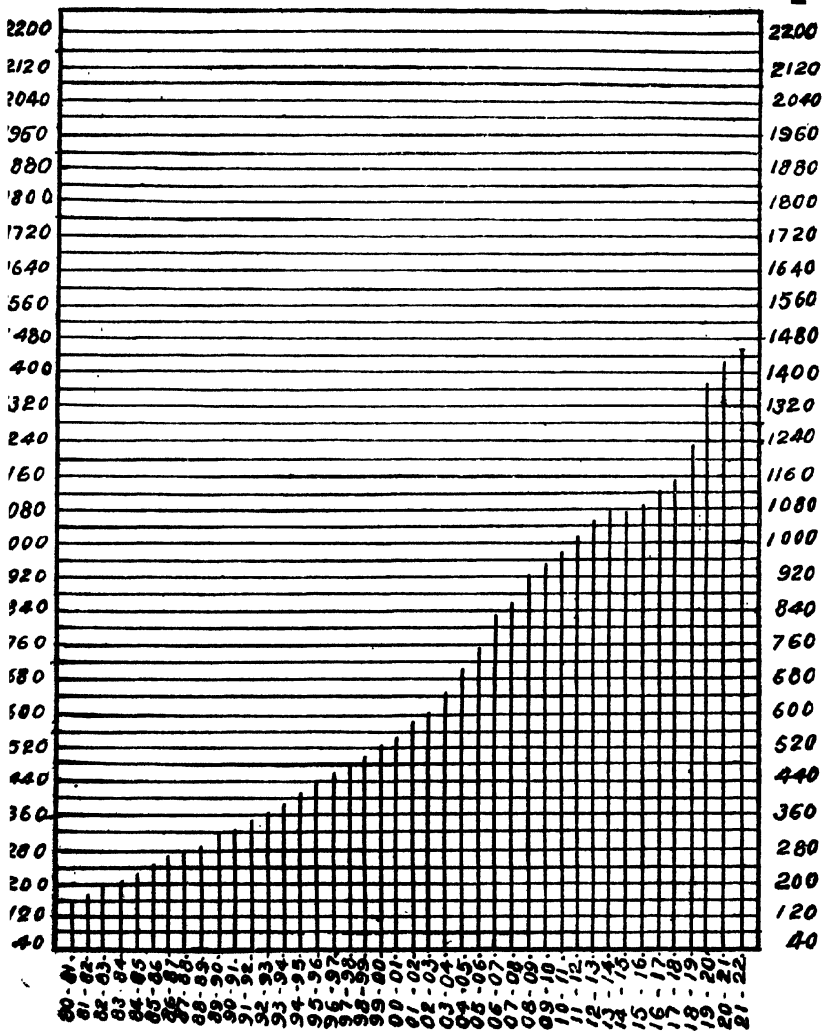
DIAGRAM 16.

Operating Ratios of Railways in India and certain other Countries.

	Year.	Operating Ratio.
United States of America	1921	100·47 per cent.
France—State Lines only	1922	115 ,, ,,
All Lines	1922	89 ,, ,,
15 English Railways	1922	80·6 ,, ,,
Tasmanian Railways	1922	91·46 ,, ,,
South Africa Railways	1921-22	82·7 ,, ,,
Argentine Railways	1921-22	74·34 to 85·20 ,, ,,
India	1921-22	76·22 ,, ,,
	1922-23	69·09 ,, ,,

DIAGRAM 17.

The Growth of postal traffic since 1880-81. All articles.



came into force from the 24th April 1922, was a very heavy reduction in the volume of the letter and postcard mail: in some offices the reduction was as great as 30 per cent. However, as the public became accustomed to the new rates, the volume steadily increased until, at the end of the year, the decline in the number of letters stood at 15 per cent. and of postcards 17 per cent. The effect of the higher rates of postage in reducing the volume of the mail was felt more in the large commercial centres than in the rural districts, where people write so seldom that the initial charge makes little difference. The net result, however, of raising the rates was that the Department was able to show a surplus of Rs. 27 lakhs in 1922-23 as compared with a deficit of Rs. 58 lakhs in 1921-22.

The Post Office and the Public.

Mails in India are transported by such means as runners, railways, horses, river craft, mailcarts, camels and tongas; but where practicable, the slower means of conveyance are gradually being replaced by motor transport. The public utilities of the Indian post office are not confined to the collection, conveyance and delivery of correspondence. In addition, it acts as the banker and agent of the people, enabling them to do their shopping from all distances; it sells quinine; it collects customs duty; it insures the lives of Government employees; and it pays the pensions of retired officials of the Indian Army. In view of all these services, as might well be expected, its activities are highly appreciated by the general public. There is an insistent demand for the opening of additional post offices; and bitter are the complaints when financial stringency compels the authorities to close those offices whose volume of business does not justify the expense of their maintenance. The postal organisation has naturally not been exempt from the general retrenchment; and during the year under review certain services have had to be curtailed.

Telegraphs.

The Telegraph Branch again showed a profit in 1922-23, its total receipts being over Rs. 3·24 crores as against working charges of Rs. 3·16 crores. The total number of inland and foreign telegrams disposed of during the year was 19·2 millions, which showed none the less a decrease of 6 per cent. as compared with the figures of 1921-22. Since the early days of 1839, when the first line was constructed in India over a distance of 21 miles, the total line and wire mileage has steadily increased. It now consists of approximately 93,000 miles of line and cable, carrying 438,000 miles of wire. At the close of the year, there were about 11,000 telegraph

offices open in India, of which more than 9,000 were open to the public. Telegraph communication with the United Kingdom was improved during the year under review, by the reopening of the "Indo" route in Karachi, Teheran and Berlin, which had been interrupted since the outbreak of the War.

Wireless.

Progress in wireless however, has been seriously affected by financial stringency. At the suggestion of the Retrenchment Committee almost all development in the Wireless Branch was indefinitely postponed; and most of the Indian Stations have been put under "care and maintenance" parties. On the other hand work has proceeded rapidly on the new high-speed continuous-wave stations at Mingladon near Rangoon and at Madras. These stations commenced handling traffic in February, 1924, being operated by distant control from the respective Telegraph Offices. The Baudot system was tested and successfully applied to this circuit—a great advance on other methods. Press messages from England continued to be received, including the British official communiqués broadcasted from Oxford (Leafield). Wireless communication is still resorted to between Peshawar and Kabul when the land-line is faulty or congested. The instructional establishment continued to do satisfactory work. The training of military personnel at the Karachi Wireless School was discontinued on grounds of expense; and owing to retrenchment, no more departmental personnel have been trained. But a number of operators and mechanics from the Gwalior and Mysore States have been under instruction. During the year under review the number of licenced stations considerably increased; and numerous certificates were issued for Wireless watchers under the Indian Merchant Shipping Act, 1923.

Imperial Wireless Schemes.

So far as the Imperial Wireless Scheme is concerned, good progress was made during this period. The conditions under which Government proposes that private enterprise shall erect and operate the Indian stations were satisfactorily settled, and it is hoped that the contract will be placed by about the middle of 1924. Little advance has been made regarding broadcasting, which in India presents certain special difficulties.

Broadcasting.

The Radio Club of Bengal, however, which was established in Calcutta during the year, was granted a licence to broadcast programmes other than news, and has been very successful. A similar organisation is on foot in Bombay.

The expansion of the telephone system is still retarded by the after-effects of the War, but better progress is now being made. On

March 31st, 1923, there were 227 exchanges with 13,320 connections owned and maintained by Government, of which 140 with 1,486 connections were private exchanges operated by the users to whom they were rented. The number of exchanges owned and worked by licenced companies was 12, with 12,590 connections. It will be apparent from these figures that in India the telephone system is still in its infancy; but existing installations are now being developed and extended, and obsolete plant and exchanges are being replaced by modern apparatus. Full advantage has been taken of recent improvements in automatic telephone apparatus; and the Post and Telegraph Department has now 13 exchanges equipped with automatic plant, while several more are in process of installation. In the case of Licensed Companies, automatic apparatus is also making headway. Both the Bombay and the Madras Telephone Companies are now beginning to employ the automatic installation. Good progress has been made in the extension of the trunk-line system. The Punjab and the United Provinces have now been linked up telephonically; and through-communication is possible between the larger towns. Communication has also been established as an experimental measure between Bombay and Delhi; and when permanent equipment is available, the Department will be in a position to provide direct speech between Bombay, the Punjab and the United Provinces. The trunk lines between Bombay, Ahmedabad and Poona, are being very largely used; while in Bengal the trunk lines between Calcutta and the coal fields have met a pressing public demand. From the financial point of view it is satisfactory to note that after allowing for ample depreciation, the telephone exchange and trunk systems show a return of 6 per cent. on the capital invested.

Telephones.

Automatic System.

Trunk lines.

Among other means of communication which in the future may play a great part in the development of India, mention must be made of aviation. Surveys of the primary air-routes Bombay—Calcutta, Calcutta—Rangoon, Calcutta—Delhi, and Delhi—Karachi have been completed; and at some of the terminal stations aerodromes have been provided, and landing grounds at intermediate points. Unfortunately the general financial situation in India has brought civil aviation practically to a standstill for lack of funds during the period under review. This is the more regrettable, since India and Burma, apart from the fact that they are on the direct line of communication to Australia and the East, are better

Aviation.

situated naturally for the development of air transport than many other countries. Meterological conditions throughout most of the year are ideal, and the difficulties arising from the monsoon should not prove insurmountable. Geographical features of themselves invite the development of aviation; since on many routes railways are practically impossible and the existing means of transport slow and cumbersome. Moreover the large commercial centres are situated at distances which conform conveniently to the speed of aeroplanes. The service between Bombay and Calcutta could be flown by night, leaving with letters after business hours, and arriving in time for their delivery next morning. This would mean a saving of two working days on each journey. Between Calcutta and Rangoon, a night air mail service taking nine hours would save nearly three working days. With all the advantages that an increased development of civil aviation is likely to bring to India, it must be pronounced a matter of extreme regret that financial stringency has prevented all possibility of substantial progress. Action is however being taken to clear the ground for rapid advance if and when it becomes feasible. Arrangements have been made by the Royal Air Force for a resurvey of the primary air routes in India, and for the compilation of up to date and reliable estimates of the cost of their establishment. Considerable progress has already been made with the surveys. In particular, examination is being directed to the question whether a sea-plane route between Calcutta and Rangoon would not be preferable to the land route adopted in the original survey. If any scheme for an air service between India and England should materialise, a demand for accelerated transport facilities between the terminal of the service and the main trade centres of India may well arise. In this contingency much of the necessary information will be provided by the surveys now in hand. One branch of aerial activity demands special mention. The late Chief Inspector of Aircraft has on behalf of the Government of Burma recently undertaken a survey of 700 square miles of forest in the Irrawaddy Delta. The survey of this area by any other means would have presented great difficulty, and the enterprise, the first of its kind in India, has been an unqualified success.

Meteorology.

In connection with the future of aviation, we may notice the important work of the Indian Meteorological Department, which, by the determination of upper air movements, is steadily preparing for the day when precise information on this matter will be necessary to safeguard aircraft and to minimise the cost of flying. The Aerological Observatory at Agra,

which had hitherto been sanctioned as an experimental measure, was placed on a permanent footing; and upper air observations were fully resumed. In view of the fact that such observations are essential in connection with gun calibration and artillery practice, the military authorities sent a number of men to the Agra Observatory for training; and are now using the apparatus and material supplied by this institution in artillery practice camps. Considerable public interest has of late been taken in the question of the issue of storm warnings to ports and shipping, in which connection we may refer to the loss of the S.S. "Okara". Investigations are accordingly being conducted as to whether the present system, under which storm warnings are issued from the Headquarters Office, is capable of improvement. In the direction of research, several memoirs have been prepared during the year. An enquiry has been conducted on the subject of the exposure of thermometers; and three valuable studies of upper air conditions, as derived from kite and ballon ascents, have been made. A preliminary examination has also been concluded concerning the relations of the weather all over the world, with the object of securing greater reliability in forecasting the monsoon.

CHAPTER IV.

The People and their Problems.

Mention has been made in previous statements of the hardships undergone by the agricultural population in the year 1920-21. Fortunately, since that time the monsoon has been generally favourable to India. In 1922, in particular, both the quantity and the distribution of the rainfall were excellent; although in the middle of the year exceptionally heavy downpours led to disastrous floods in certain portions of Bengal. The damage was increased by three days' continuous rain in September; with the result that distress prevailed in the Rajshahi division throughout the winter of 1922, and the first half of 1923. Test relief works had to be opened in various parts of the affected area in February 1923; but the highest number of persons employed on these works was 18,400. In June, however, conditions improved, and the works were closed down. In the Madras Presidency, poor harvest prospects in the Bellary district necessitated the opening of local fund works to provide employment, and the postponement of land revenue collections in certain taluks. But with the exception of these incidents, the general conditions of the year 1923 were favourable from the agricultural standpoint. As will be observed from the map on the opposite page, the 1923 monsoon was excellent, and in most parts of India the crops were good. In July and August, some damage was caused by excessive rainfall and floods in certain parts of Madras, Bengal, the United Provinces, Burma, and Assam. By September 1923, the local distress brought about by the floods had materially improved; and it is gratifying to be able to record that in the course of the calender year 1923, neither famine nor scarcity was declared in any part of India.

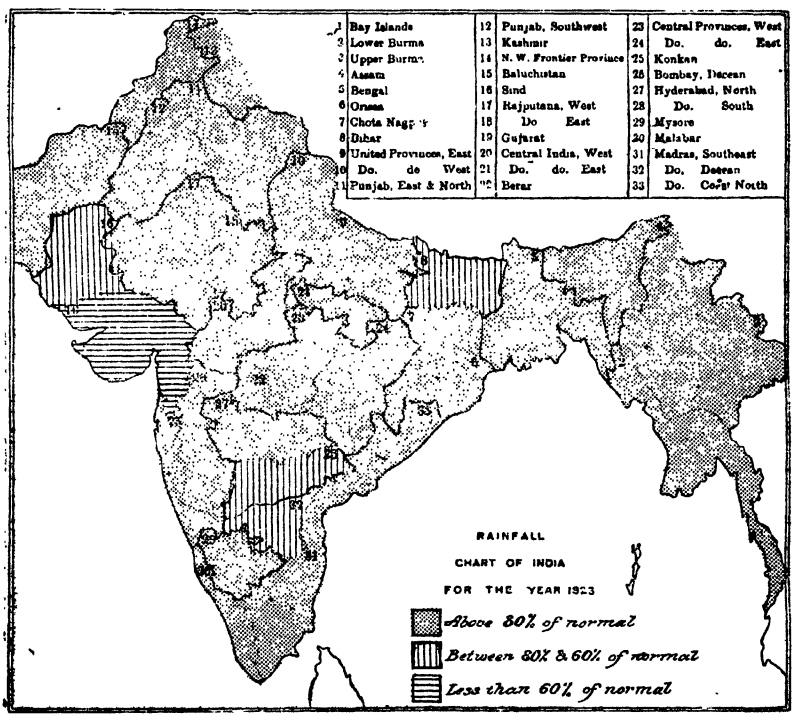
General conditions of 1923.

As a result of the excellent foodcrops of 1922-23, the price of grain has continually fallen. In December 1923, the wholesale price of cereals in Calcutta was only five per cent above their level at the end of July 1914. As a natural consequence, India's export trade in food grains has once more revived; and in the first nine months of the financial year 1923-24, about 2·36 million tons of grain and pulse were exported—an increase of 600,000 tons over the figures for the corresponding period of the previous year.

Foodstuffs.

DIAGRAM 19.

Rainfall Chart of India 1923.



There exists in certain quarters in India a popular belief that the export of food grains from the country is something to be discouraged; and the first symptom of an unfavourable year is generally the commencement of specific demands for the restriction of export. It is often stated, indeed, that the "drain" of India's food supply is among the most effective causes of the high prices which obtain in a poor season. But analysis shows that this conclusion rests upon insufficient grounds. The average net export of grain and pulse from India in the ten years ending 1918 averaged some 3·8 million tons per annum, as against a total production of food grains estimated at somewhere near 80 million tons. This small exportable surplus provides a valuable reserve, which in case of necessity can be retained in the country by temporary restrictions. Unquestionably, it was this reserve which assisted India to pull through the crises caused by the monsoon failures of 1918-19 and 1920-21. If a permanent policy of restriction were to be imposed, as certain sections of the Indian press and public from time to time demand, the exportable surplus would no longer remain as a standby in emergency; for if the cultivator were to be deprived of his export market, he would cease in time to grow the commodities which he could not profitably sell. Inevitably, he would turn his attention to cotton and to oil seeds, thus reducing the food supplies of the country, and destroying the margin against famine. We may note in passing that the cultivating interests have never been in favour of a restriction upon the export of food grains; and only acquiesce in it for short periods when a serious failure of supply drives the administration to take this step. The demand for permanent restriction comes from the towns; and seems to be connected with the theory that it is the duty under all circumstances of the country districts to provide cheap food for the urban population. So long as economic conditions do not interfere with the low price of food grains in the town markets, the demand for the imposition of restrictions upon the export trade in foodgrains is no longer heard. During the year under review, these conditions obtained; with the result that the cultivators profited by the export market, and the representatives of urban opinion made no protest.

Export Versus Restriction.

Town and Country.

Generally speaking the tendency of the year 1923 has been in the direction of a reduction in the cost of living. During the whole year, the trend has been notably downwards, thus continuing the course noticed in last year's

Cost of Living in 1923.

statement. The figure published by the Bombay Labour Office shows that the average index for the 12 months of the calendar year 1923, was 154, as compared with the standard of 100 in July 1914. This figure 154 may be fruitfully compared with the index numbers 164 for 1922 and 173 for 1921. It is now exactly at the level of 1918. During 1923 food prices also remained steady, the average food index varying between 146 and 152. Cereals stood at the same level (124) in November as in January, but rose by 8 points in December 1923, owing to a marked fall in the imports of Burma rice. The index for pulses, upon which so large a portion of the Indian population subsists, fell by no less than 42 points from 158 in January to 116 in June, and was steady at 116 to the end of 1923. Other articles of food remained at the same level at the end of the year as at the beginning ; but there was a fall of 5 points in the " fuel and lighting " group, and a fall of 6 points in the " clothing " group. But while the cost of living thus showed a tendency to fall even below the level of 1922, there was no corresponding decline in the general average of wages, which, with their usual tendency to lag behind prices,

Real Wages.

still correspond to the requirements of a more expensive epoch. There is evidence to show that both in certain industries, and in certain parts of the country, a substantial margin now exists between the real or effective wages and the present cost of living. Careful investigations undertaken by the Bombay Labour Office into the wages and cost of living of the cotton industry throughout the Bombay Presidency, show that in May 1921, the wages of men operatives in Bombay had increased by 90 per cent, while the cost of living had increased only by 67 per cent, over the 1914 standard. The real or effective wages for the men operatives of the cotton industry in Bombay were 14 per cent higher than in the prewar period. Throughout the presidency as a whole, the effective wages, after discounting the increased cost of living, worked out at 14 per cent above the 1914 standard.

We may now briefly indicate certain of the principal factors which have operated to influence the conditions of the rural and urban masses

Rural Labour in 1923.

during the year 1923. The excellent harvests have produced, as we have already seen, a considerable fall in the price of food grains. Throughout the year, there was ample work at good wages for the agricultural labourer, who now finds himself in a position of greater independence than he has for some time enjoyed. Indeed, from various parts of the country there have been continual complaints on the part of employers as to the high wages which agricultural labour at present exacts. The margin at present exis-

ting between the cost of living of the classes labouring for cash wages, and the figure of their earnings, has made it a very good year for them. Accordingly, there has been a conspicuous tendency towards joint action against the landlord, for the purpose of maintaining wages at the standard level, and exacting favourable conditions of work. We noticed in previous statements the history of the movements in various parts of India known as tenants' unions, or Kisan Sabhas. At the time when the non-cooperation movement was at its height, there were signs that the leadership of these movements was falling into the hands of the more lawless elements. But with the subsidence of wide-spread political agitation, the tenants' unions have begun once more to limit their activities to specially economic matters. In many parts of the country they have succeeded in exerting considerable pressure upon the landlords, for whom the year on the whole has been unfavourable, owing to the high cost of labour and the low price of agricultural produce. Skilled labour has been particularly in demand; and as the supply has been short, now finds itself in a very strong position. We must notice that rural labour works under conditions which differs very considerably from those which characterise the operations of urban labour. The general level of rural wages is lower than that of urban wages; but on the other hand, the rural labourer gets many things free for which his brother in the town has to pay. He gets a house to live in; while he is working for his employer, he gets either one or two meals a day; and in addition he often receives such amenities as a ration of tobacco. Further, his monetary income is far from representing his total budget; for even when he is not working the whole day for his employer, his food is mainly produced by his own labour and that of his family. Broadly speaking, these characteristics hold good for some 90 per cent of the total population of India.

Conditions of Work in the Country.

In the towns, however, the situation is somewhat different. The monetary income of the individual represents by far the largest proportion of his assets; and when wages lag far behind prices, great economic suffering results. Generally speaking, the urban classes are the first to feel the pinch of poverty at such times as the price of food is high. This is particularly noticeable in the case of the middle-classes. With their small fixed incomes, their large families and their increasing expenditure, they have recently passed through a very disadvantageous period. Fortunately, during 1923, as during 1922, cheap food has deprived the

Conditions of Work in the Towns.

middle class urban population of much of the painful anxiety characterising their attitude throughout previous years. But it would be a mistake to imagine that the year 1923 has been particularly favourable for them. The cost of food, clothing, and lighting, has indeed tended to decline; but the middle classes have had to pay heavy rates for such labour as they happen to employ. In India as elsewhere, these classes are usually debarred by social status from undertaking work of certain kinds. The market in which they themselves compete for employment is small and chronically overstocked; and in general they are in a far less favourable position to adapt themselves to a change in the economic situation than are the labouring classes. In these circumstances, it is no matter for surprise that the middle classes in the towns constitute the backbone of the opposition to Government. They are ever ready to voice their grievances; and their virtual control of the vernacular press enables them to become extremely vocal. The somewhat easier circumstances in which they have found themselves during 1922-23 may be reckoned among the most important causes of the decline of that wide-spread political agitation which has characterised the years immediately preceding. It is however remarkable, in view of the unfavourable economic position in which the urban middle classes find themselves, that there has hitherto been but small tendency towards combination for the improvement of their prospects.

The Middle Classes.

Generally speaking, the position of the town labourer is far more favourable than that of the middle-class men. During the year under review he has been able to take full advantage of the high rates of wages; while he has profited from the lower cost of living. Skilled labour in particular has enjoyed the advantages derived from high demand and low supply; while even the unskilled labourer has not found the market in which he competes overstocked. At present, both skilled and unskilled labour may be characterised, at least in comparison with Western countries, as definitely unorganised; but both are realising the power they possess of bringing their grievances before the notice of the public by strikes which interfere with the utility services.

Town Labourers.

The problem as to whether the Indian masses are becoming poorer or richer under British rule, is one which has for long occupied the attention of public men in India. There is considerable indirect evidence as to a growing prosperity rather than to an increasing poverty. The multiplication of third-class passengers on the railways during the last decade would seem to

Conditions of the Masses.

indicate that more money is available after the bare necessaries of life have been met than was previously the case. The recently increased absorption of rupees, which three years ago threatened the whole currency of India with inconvertibility, combined with the growing employment of silver for purposes of adornment by classes of the population previously, and within living memory, accustomed to the use of brass, would seem to point in the same direction. Perhaps more important as contributory evidence to growing comfort, is the manner in which the agricultural population have recently survived both scarcity and famine. During the year 1921, the proportion of the total population which was in receipt of relief was considerably less than 3 per cent throughout the whole area, widespread as it was, affected by monsoon failure. In this connection, it may be pointed out that "famine" connotes at the present time something very different from its implication in the old days. Not so very long ago, a famine meant absolute inadequacy of food, generally arising from some natural catastrophe. It implies now nothing more than the inability of a section of the population to pay the high prices which food grains occasionally attain. Few things were more striking during the period of distress characteristic of 1921, than the fact that even the depressed classes of the population, who within living memory were accustomed in times of shortage to subsist upon seeds and roots, were able to purchase corn when the price was 4 seers to the rupee. Further, old men have been known to remark upon the change which within the last two or three decades has come over the clothing of the poorer classes. Even to-day, according to Western standards, this dress would be considered pitiably insufficient; but those observers who have long experience of the country do not fail to notice symptoms of improvement both as to quantity and as to quality.

Indirect Evidence of Progress.

Famine.

There is in addition a certain amount of direct evidence which points to an amelioration in the economic condition of the Indian masses. Any statement as to the average income per head of the Indian population must be received with great reserve; first, on account of the amazing variety of climates and conditions which characterises various parts of the Indian sub-continent; and secondly, on account of the difficulty of estimating the true economic resources of the average individual in a country of which the different parts are passing by unequal transitions from a natural to a monetary economy. Indian

Direct Evidence of Progress.

publicists often repeat the statement that the average income for all India is only Rs. 30 per head per annum. It seems certain, however, that this estimate is entirely inaccurate. It was made at the close of the last century; and then was reckoned as a minimum rather than a maximum computation. But it continues to hold ground; and indeed provides one of the indictments most frequently levelled against the Administration. Even those who are inclined to think it errs on the side of an underestimate, are generally unwilling to abandon it until such time as they shall be provided with the results of an elaborate and costly enquiry, now frequently demanded, into the average *per capita* income throughout the country. We have already briefly indicated certain considerations which would seem to imply that any such figure, however carefully estimated, would be of very dubious value. These objections do not, however, apply to statistics collected from a definite and circumscribed area, within the boundaries of which a certain uniformity of conditions is possible. Certain Provincial Governments have recently directed their attention to the collection of statistical information, the publication of index numbers, and the investigations of family budgets. Unfortunately, this valuable work has in some localities been interrupted by financial stringency; but though it is still almost in its infancy, its importance is being gradually recognised, and there is reason to hope that it may before long be taken up on an adequate scale. The results which have been gathered from investigations conducted in particular Provinces are very far from confirming the "Rs. 30" figure. In Madras, for example, the statistical branch of the Department of Agriculture has published an extremely careful estimate of the income which is earned by agriculturalists, in the form of agricultural products throughout the Presidency. It has been calculated that the total agricultural and non-agricultural income is somewhere near Rs. 434 crores. The population of Madras according to the 1921 Census being 42·3 millions, the average income per head for that Presidency works out at a little over Rs. 100. Hence, even allowing for the rise in the cost of living which has characterised the first two decades of the present century, the income of the people of Madras would seem to be on the increase. And meagre though it still is, accordingly to the standards of all Western countries at the present day, it obtains in Indian, and not in European, surroundings. We must remember that in India, where life is regulated upon a family rather

Difficulties of a "Per Capita" Estimate.

Provincial Statistical Enquiries.

Madras.

than upon an individual basis, this small figure, when multiplied by four or five in accordance with the constitution of the average family unit, provides a scale of subsistence which is less painfully inadequate than might be suggested by its actual size. Investigations pursued in Bombay have yielded results not dissimilar. The net *per capita* annual income, which is arrived at by dividing the gross income of a family (*minus* agricultural and business expenditure) by the total number of persons in the family, works out about Rs. 100, for urban localities ; and for rural areas at about Rs. 75. In Bombay City itself, it has been estimated, as a result of the investigation of nearly 2,500 family budgets, that the monthly income, of an average working-class family consisting of 1·1 man, 1·1 woman, and 2·0 children, stands at Rs. 52-4-6 per month, or 17*s.* 5*d.* per week. The percentage expenditure on main heads show that of the total income 56·8 per cent was spent on food, 7·4 per cent on fuel and lights, 9·6 per cent on clothing, 7·7 per cent on house rent, and 18·5 per cent on miscellaneous. And with the fall in food prices which has taken place during the last two years, there can be little doubt that the position of this class of the Bombay population is now more prosperous than it has been for some time. But it must also be remembered that the Bombay estimates indicate that the poorest classes of the population were in 1921 compelled to spend 68 per cent of their income on food, and 15 per cent on clothing. Another 11 per cent went on compulsory expenditure of various kinds, leaving only 6 per cent voluntary expenditure, including amusements, luxuries, and even education. Further, in certain parts of the Bombay Presidency, such as the Deccan, income falls very far below the general level. Where rainfall is precarious and uncertain, and the soil shallow and poor, the income from all sources per head in a typical village has been calculated at Rs. 33·12 per annum, as against a minimum of expenditure necessary for real needs in respect of food and clothing at Rs. 44 per annum. At the same time, there is reason to hope that with the recent rises in wages and fall in the price of food, the position even in these areas has improved. The daily average wages of field labourers throughout the whole Presidency have risen from 4 annas 9 pies in 1913 to 8 annas 6 pies in 1921, and 9 annas in 1922 ; while in the Deccan circle, where the villages just mentioned were located, the daily wages of field labourers have risen during the same period from 4 annas 6 pies to 7 annas 6 pies and 8 annas 3 pies. The wages of unskilled labourers also show a rise,

Bombay.

Wages and Prices.

Field Labourers.

which is considerably more marked in accordance with the great demand for their services arising from factories, workshops, and new construction. For the Presidency as a whole, the daily average wages of unskilled labour in district headquarters towns, have risen from 6 annas 3 pies in 1913 to 11 annas 6 pies in 1921, and 12 annas in 1922. The rise in the wages of skilled labour reflects, as in only natural, the same tendencies in an enhanced degree. For the Presidency as a whole the daily average wages of skilled labour rose from 13 annas 9 pies in 1913, to Rs. 1-8 annas 9 pies in 1921 ; and now stand at Rs. 1-10 annas 9 pies. In connection with these wages we should remember that the cost of living throughout the Bombay Presidency now stands only at 154 as compared with the norm of 100 in July 1914. Thus while the cost of living has increased by 54 per cent during the last ten years, daily average wages have roughly doubled. An interesting parallel to this condition of affairs is exemplified in the results of the recent wages survey undertaken in a part of India whose conditions differ widely from those obtaining in Bombay, namely the Punjab. A study of the diagram on the opposite page will reveal the tendencies which have operated in the case of unskilled rural labour through the course of the period 1912-1922. It will be noticed that in the first year mentioned, the daily wage was predominantly in the region of 6 annas. By the year 1917, the time of the next survey, the predominant wage had risen to 8 annas. In 1922, there are what might be called two predominant wages, one in the neighbourhood of 8 annas and one in the neighbourhood of 12 annas. Moreover, the survey conducted during this last year reveals an increasing tendency to the development of a small group of exceptional wages, very much higher than any in existence during the two previous periods—a fact which is probably to be explained by the gradual introduction of the competitive system and the consequent disturbance of the equal value of labour. The tendencies towards wage—increase, as in Bombay, are also exemplified in the case of both unskilled and skilled labour in urban areas. The most common rate for unskilled labour in the towns of the Punjab has risen from the neighbourhood of 6 annas per day in 1912, to the neighbourhood of 12 annas per day in 1922. In the case of skilled labour, such as workers in iron and hardware, brass workers and carpenters, the average wage has risen from a figure of round about 16 annas per diem in 1912,

Unskilled Urban Labour.

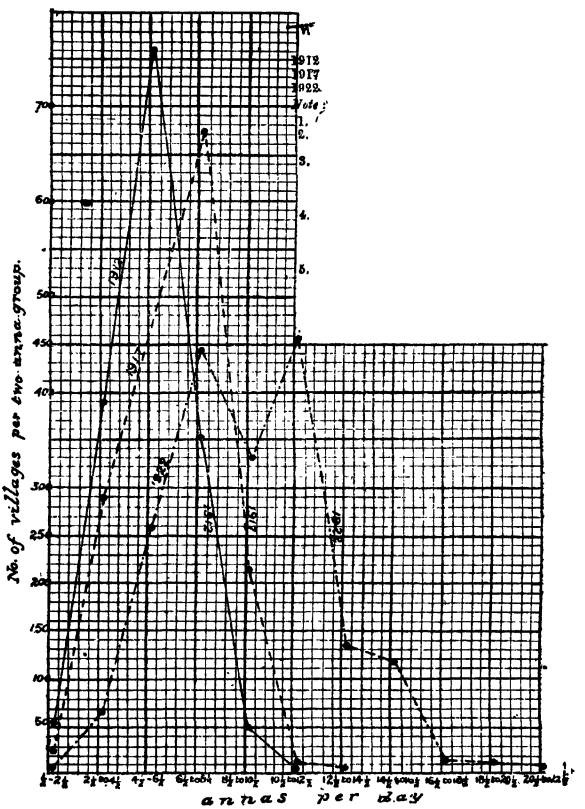
Skilled Labour.

The Punjab.

Rising Wages.

DIAGRAM 20.

Punjab Rural unskilled labour.



to between 32 and 40 annas in 1922. During the same period, the price of food grains has risen from the neighbourhood of Rs. 3 per maund to the neighbourhood of Rs. 5 per maund. It would seem therefore, broadly speaking, that the position of labour in the Punjab has, like the position of labour in Bombay, tended to improve during the last ten years.

Government and the Condition of the Masses.

But although it seems quite possible to maintain with fair degree of certainty that the masses of the Indian population, at least in some parts of the country, are gradually improving in their economic condition, it must be borne in mind that a very large proportion of the inhabitants of India are still beset with poverty of a kind which finds no parallel in the more exigent because less tropical climates, of Western lands. Such improvement as is taking place proceeds with painful slowness. In consequence, the Administration is frequently blamed for apathy and carelessness; and the backwardness of the country from an industrial point of view has long been a standing grievance on the part of the educated classes. Of recent years these classes have been demanding with greater and greater vehemence a policy of state subsidies for industry; the compilation of elaborate statistics of production and consumption; the creation of a nation-wide organization for the encouragement of agricultural and industrial development. The question is frequently asked as to why Government has not done all this; and now, when the control of industrial development has been handed over to ministers in every Province, complaints as to the inadequacy of the foundations upon which the industries of the country are to be erected, have become even more frequent. The explanation of the failure of the British Government to encourage productiveness in the manner now demanded by the educated classes is very simple. Such a programme as has been laid down by constructive thinkers of the type represented by that distinguished engineer, Sir M. Visvesvaraya, would cost for its initiation a considerable amount of money. Now the taxation which can be levied by any Administration situated as is the Government of India, is for political reasons necessarily strictly limited. It has been calculated that the figure of expenditure of the whole Governmental machine in India, including both Central and Provincial administrations, represents taxation per head which is in the neighbourhood of 12*s*. It may indeed be doubted, as Lord Selborne once remarked, whether such an economical government ever existed before in the history of the world. But in consequence, there has been

Accusations of Apathy.

Difficulties of the Position.

very little money to spare over and above the bare essentials of the administrative services. Moreover, considering the small *per capita* income which recent investigations would seem to suggest as typical of large masses of the population in various parts of t e country, it is easy to see why t e taxation figure has not hitherto been expanded in such a manner as to provide funds for state aided schemes of economic development upon an extensive scale. The statement that the destruction of a poor man is his poverty, holds true of nations as well as of individuals ; and it is the poverty of India which has so far operated to prevent economic development.

If the poverty of India were due to her administrative system, there might be some hope that the changes now being introduced into that system would lead to early and widespread improvement. But the Indian masses, so far from being ground down by the exactions of an extravagant Government, are still so situated that they can barely support the cost of an Administration which limits its functions only to the most elementary services.

Causes of Indian Poverty.

The real truth is that the undeniable poverty of India arises principally from the fact that the country is not organised for the production of wealth. On every side tradition and sentiment, rather than economic advantage, rule to-day as they have ruled for centuries ; exercising upon the Indian masses a cumulative pressure which is none the less crushing for being commonly unrecognised. If one asks why, after a century of British rule, the country is not organised for wealth, the answer is clear. The British found in India a society organised upon a traditional communalistic basis, in which individualism was at a discount. This system had persisted for centuries among hundreds of millions of people. It would have been difficult to disturb, even had there been a certainty in the minds of British statesmen that to disturb it was their duty. In any event the task was far beyond the resources which any Government of India organised on the present basis could hope to command. Hence it happened that while British rule provided the rare individual enterprise with unequalled opportunities for flourishing, any such sustained effort to change the whole outlook of the masses, as is involved in the schemes which advanced Indian opinion now demands, was quite outside the range of practical politics. Now that industrial development and agricultural progress have alike been transferred to Indian hands, it is possible that the terms of the problem

India not organised for Wealth.

Tradition of Communalism.

may be altered. But the difficulties are very great. The whole Indian outlook on life is involved. It is quite permissible to maintain that the deep-lying religious sentiment which causes the vast majority of Indians to regard their present lives as relatively unimportant in the great fabric of past and future, embodies something far nobler and more enduring than the material and highly individualised ideals of the Western World. But from the point of view of the economic development of the country, such an outlook is far more of a hindrance than of a help. It will certainly necessitate many sacrifices, at which a Western mind can only guess, if India is to pay the price of a highly industrialised condition : and at the present moment it is among the principal difficulties in the way of economic progress. It condemns millions in India to a careless, hand to mouth existence, which is content with the barest minimum of requirements necessary for keeping body and soul together, and regards the effort necessary for the conquest of means to satisfy additional wants as something not worth the sacrifice involved.

Indian Outlook on Life.

Perhaps the most striking characteristic of the Indian peasant, as compared with the peasant of the West, is his lack of frugality. It is perfectly true that his resources are small; but he does not use those which he possesses to the best advantage. He inherits from his forebears nothing of the immense wealth which in Europe has been handed down to present-day agriculturalists in the form of improvements, reclamations, and working capital. In part, this is doubtless due to the fact that in India the benevolence of nature does away with those incentives which in more temperate climates have forced frugality upon the cultivator. Large tracts are so fertile that men need do little beyond scratching the soil and scattering a handful of seed. Hence millions upon millions of Indians fall readily into the habit, to which their prevailing outlook on life would seem to predispose them, of maintaining a low standard of living with small exertion, rather than of striving after a higher standard at greater cost to themselves. In addition the widely prevailing illiteracy tends to keep average production very low. This fact accounts for what seems at first sight a singular contradiction, namely the general shortage of labour of all kinds, in the midst of a population of vast magnitude. For while labour has commonly to be paid highly, according to the standards prevailing in the country, to induce it to put forward the exertion consequent upon employment, its inefficiency makes produc-

The Indian Peasant.

Low Productiveness.

tion very low. Further, to these general characteristics of the Indian peasantry, which of themselves afford a serious obstacle to the immediate improvement of *per capita* production, we must add certain permanent factors operating in the same direction. In the first place, the fecundity of India is very great; and as there are no prudential restraints whatever,

Increase of Population.

the population tends to multiply up to the very margin of bare subsistence. The number of mouths increases year by year; so that India is now supporting a population greater than any she has known before. But the means for filling these mouths are prevented, as will shortly be made plain, from proportionately expanding by the restraints of an inflexible but uneconomic tradition. Secondly, we may remember that over an immense proportion of India, the Hindu joint family system prevails. This ancient and venerable institution has many social advantages; but from the point of view of industrial progress, it is a depressing, rather than an elevating

Little Individualism.

factor. It tends to penalise the able and the industrious for the benefit of the lazy and of the incompetent. It affords accordingly little encouragement to individual initiative, for it rarely throws the individuals composing it upon their own unaided resources.

In addition to the lack of frugality which at present characterises so large a proportion of the Indian masses, we must also take into account

The Social Heritage.

certain wide-spread prejudices. Throughout India at large, manual labour is still associated with loss of dignity; with the result that whole castes avoid production, and are devoted to callings which add little or nothing to the wealth of the community. Moreover, the social life even of the poorest is apt to be characterised by what from the economic point of view can only be described as reckless dissipation of meagre resources. There is a large expenditure of an entirely unproductive kind upon festivals, marriages, and funerals. An interesting example of the handicap constituted by prevailing usage emerges from an analysis of working-class budgets in Bombay. No less than 40 per cent of the families under examination were found to be indebted to moneylenders, the borrowing being normally undertaken for marriages, funerals and festivals. In 4 per cent

Expenditure on Festivals.

of these Bombay families the expenditure on marriages alone actually represented more than the total family income of the year. In 23 per cent it amounted to one-half of the total annual income, and in 73 per cent to something under one-half. Probably in no country in the world where the average pro-

duction is so low, do the inhabitants expend so large a proportion of their resources upon social obligations. From other points of view, there is doubtless something to be said for such a practice ; but in reckoning up the factors which militate against increased productivity, its seriousness cannot be left out of account. Nor is it only social sentiment which has operated to prevent the systematic accumulation of wealth both in the past and in the present. Religious sentiment must further be reckoned among the obstacles to immediate economic progress, for it prevents the consumption and production of much very valuable food. As a result of the almost universal veneration for the cow, horned cattle cannot be exploited for profit ; while bones, hides, skins and other commodities of great value in the West cannot be utilised to their fullest extent. Indeed, the diet prescribed by religious sentiment for a large portion of the Indian people would be accounted in a Western country as definitely uneconomical. For example, milk and clarified butter are considered among the bare necessaries of life ; but even a wealthy Western country does not use butter in the wasteful manner common in India. Large quantities of cocoanut oil are annually exported from India to Western countries, where they are manufactured into a butter—substitute which India herself is prevented by religious sentiment from consuming. Further, there is at present a great waste of available resources throughout India owing to the social tradition which prevents the employment of female labour on anything like an adequate scale. So deeply engrained in the Indian mind are the customs of segregating women and of discountenancing female labour, that it is hard for the country to realise that no advanced industrial community of the West could possibly maintain its economic standards if 50 per cent. of its population were deprived of opportunities for production. The traditional organization which runs through the whole of Indian life, also prevents the cultivators from ekeing out their resources by subsidiary pursuits. Even in advanced countries, the small holder would be hard put to it to make both ends meet if he did not devote a portion of his energies to industries such as poultry-farming, pig keeping, fruit growing and sericulture. But despite the fact that the cultivator in many Provinces of India is obliged by climatic conditions to remain idle for more than one-third of the total working days of the year, he has hardly begun to concern himself with the possibility of engaging in such subsidiary industries. His forefathers knew not these things ; why should he concern himself with them?

Religious Sentiment.

Influence upon food.

Few Subsidiary Occupations.

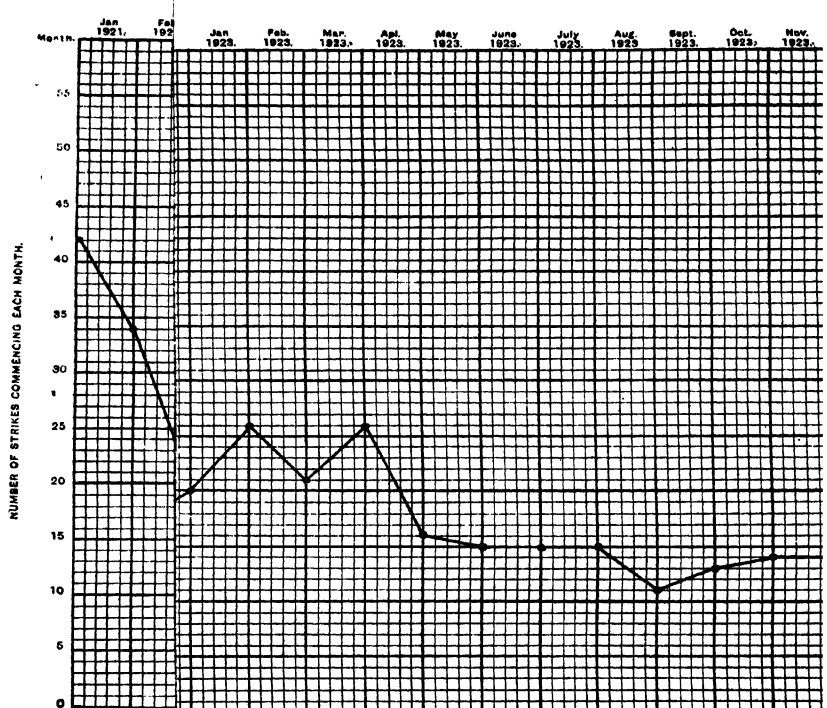
Nor has the State been backward in this sphere. During the year 1922-23, a number of important investigations into the conditions of labour were made. In Bombay, the Labour Office published the results of two valuable enquiries. In one investigation, some three thousand working class budgets were collected and analysed, with the consequence that a large amount of fresh statistical information was made available. The second enquiry was concerned with the wages and hours of labour in the cotton mill industry both in Bombay City and in other important places in the Presidency. The period under review also saw the publication of a report of the very extensive enquiry into humidification in cotton mills which had been instituted by the Government of India in June 1921. The investigation was designed in the first place to obtain accurate observations regarding the method of humidification and ventilation employed in cotton mills, and their effect upon working conditions ; and secondly to evolve recommendations designed to effect a marked amelioration of conditions without serious detriment to the industry. As a result of continuous and systematic enquiries lasting over eighteen months, Mr. T. Maloney, who conducted the investigation, was able to collect and analyse an immense mass of data bearing on temperature, humidity and chemical purity of the air ; and the effect of atmospheric conditions on the health and sickness, the efficiency and fatigue of the operatives at every season of the year. In consequence of this work, definite recommendations for the control of ventilation and humidification in cotton factories were made ; and it is hoped that the results achieved may lead to the solution of a very difficult problem. Increasing attention is also being paid to the welfare of woman workers. As a result of the draft convention recently adopted by the International Labour Conference concerning the employment of women before and after childbirth, detailed enquiries were instituted by the Local Governments in Bombay, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and the Punjab. Both the Bombay and Bengal reports have been published, with the fortunate result that public interest is becoming alive to the importance of this question. In the course of the investigation, matters relating to the possibility of grant of benefits to women and of providing special medical aid for them, have been discussed very fully with the large employers of labour. There is thus every hope that apart from the value of the information contained in these authoritative reports, their preparation

State Action: Investigation.

Statistics.

Humidity Enquiry.

Women Workers.


Month.
Jan 1921.
Jan 1923.
Feb. 1923.
Mar. 1923.
Apl. 1923.
May 1923.
June 1923.
July 1923.
Aug. 1923
Sept. 1923.
Oct. 1923.
Nov. 1923.
55
50
45
40
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
NUMBER OF STRIKES COMMENCING EACH MONTH.

will lead to a direct amelioration of the condition of the women workers.

Labour Legislation.

During the period under review certain Labour legislation, undertaken by the Central Legislature, came into effect. Indeed, it must be counted to the credit of the first reformed Legislative Assembly that it devoted a considerable portion of its time to this vitally important matter. Reference was made in last year's Report to the passing of the Factories Act of 1922. This involved a complete revision of the whole law relating to factories, and provided among a number of other reforms for the introduction of the sixty hour week, the raising of the minimum age of children from 9 to 12, a large extension of the definition of "factory," and the complete prohibition of night work for women. Further slight amendments in the Factories Act were made in 1923; and the Mines Act also came in for drastic revision. The chief reforms introduced into the new Mines Act, which was passed in March 1923, were the prohibition of the employment of children under 13 years, and the prevention of their presence below ground; the restriction of the hours of labour of adults to 60 hours a week above ground, and 54 hours below ground, and the prescription of a weekly day of rest; and the provision of increased penalities for disobedience of orders resulting in death or serious injury to workmen. At the same time, by an enlargement of the definition of "mine" the scope of the Act was greatly extended. But the activities of the new Legislature in matters concerning labour were not confined to the revision of existing legislation. Great advance was made in a new direction in the passing of the Workmen's Compensation Act in March 1923. The measure as finally passed includes practically all the employees in factories and mines, and on railways; it also extends to a number of other occupations, probably covering upwards of three million workers. But in view of the fact that it breaks entirely fresh ground for India, it is confined to the better organised industries and to industries involving more than the ordinary amount of risk. As will be realised from what has been said in a previous paragraph regarding the character of industrial labour in India, there are many factors which render the working of an Act of this type more difficult than in Western countries. In the first place, industrial labour is largely migratory, being agriculturist at heart. The workmen serve industry for only a portion of their lives, and expect ultimately to return to their villages which may be hundreds of miles

The Factories Act.

The Mines Act.

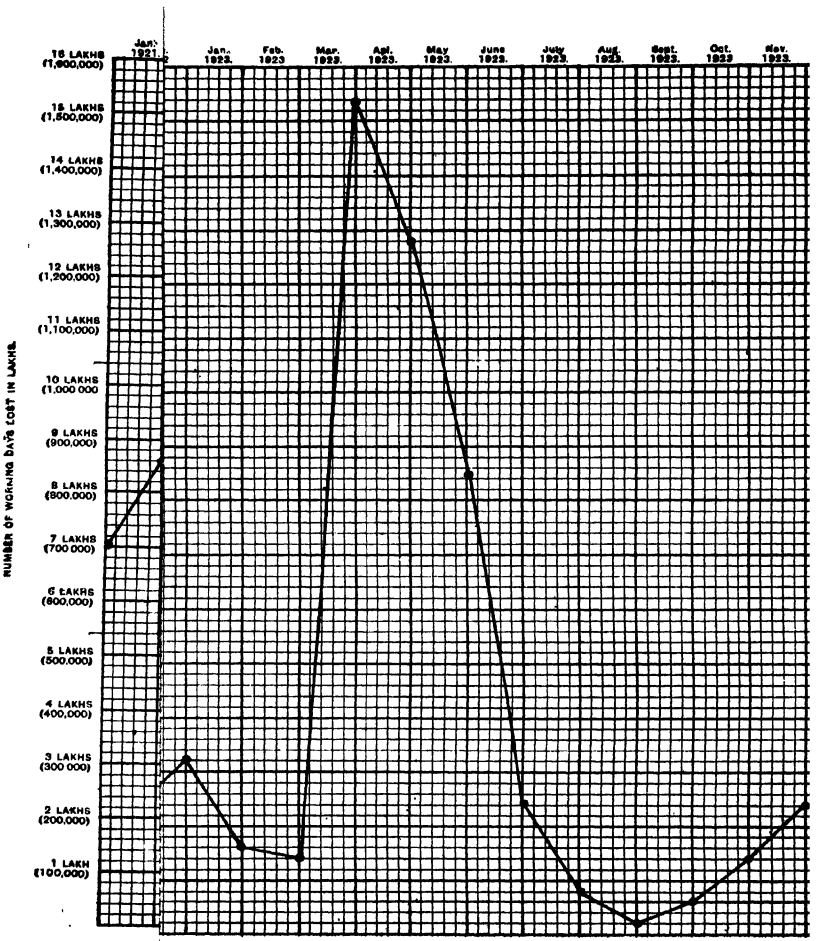
Workmen's Compensation Act.

away. Secondly, the ordinary workman is not in a position to enter into expensive litigation, nor has he any organization to assist him in carrying through a protracted case. In spite of this, the tendency to litigation is more pronounced in India than in Western countries. Thirdly, it may be noticed that there is a paucity of qualified medical men. All these difficulties have been realised in the framing of the Act, which in some of its details differs widely from typical European measures designed for the same purposes. But it seems probable that experience of its working, which begins from July 1st 1924, will indicate many directions in which improvement is possible.

Trade Unions.

In the course of the economic restlessness characterising the year 1921, labour unions came prominently before the notice of the general public on account of the magnitude and frequency of the strikes which took place. The development of the trade union movement is largely conditioned by the peculiar characteristics of Indian labour. The Indian workman is predominantly illiterate, and has few leaders from his own class to whom he can turn for guidance. In consequence trade unionism in India has been largely led by middle-class men, professional lawyers and others, who have not in all cases distinguished between economic and political considerations. Moreover, with the exception of the unions which have been built up in the larger towns, on the railways, and in some public utility services, the majority of trade unions still bear the mark of their origin as strike committees. Very often as soon as a strike is settled, the union disappears, since it has no regular constitution or definite subscription, no system of auditing or publishing accounts, and no funds for providing help to women and children in time of distress. As a result, the progress of the trade union movement during the last few years has been disappointing. Its existence has been too much bound up with the occurrence and successful conduct of strikes. When the workers possess definite and real grievances; and particularly when there is a marked gap between nominal wages and the cost of living, the inchoate combinations generally characteristic of trade unionism in India, are comparatively effective. But when economic stringency begins to pass away, the bond which unites the workers constituting all but the few really well organised unions in India, tends greatly to weaken. This was particularly the case during the year under review. The trade union movement in India made but little progress, and in some places received a set back. This is to be ascribed

Difficulties.


NUMBER OF WORKING DAYS LOST IN LAKHS
16 LAKHS (1,600,000)
15 LAKHS (1,500,000)
14 LAKHS (1,400,000)
13 LAKHS (1,300,000)
12 LAKHS (1,200,000)
11 LAKHS (1,100,000)
10 LAKHS (1,000 000
9 LAKHS (900,000)
8 LAKHS (800,000)
7 LAKHS (700 000)
6 LAKHS (600,000)
5 LAKHS (500,000)
4 LAKHS (400,000)
3 LAKHS (300 000)
2 LAKHS (200,000)
1 LAKH (100,000)
Jan. 1921
Jan. 1922.
Feb. 1923
Mar. 1923.
Apl. 1923.
May 1923.
June 1923.
July 1923.
Aug. 1923.
Sept. 1923.
Oct. 1923
Nov. 1923.

directly to the fact that the number of strikes, and more especially the number of successful strikes, considerably declined. As a result, the interest of the operatives in the movement diminished. Numbers of unions had confined their activities to the endeavour to secure cohesion during disputes, devoting little or no attention to the construction of a permanent organization on a sound financial basis. The disappearance of such unions, or their reduction to paper organizations, inevitably followed from the general conditions of the year 1923. But unfortunately, even the better conducted unions also suffered. They were as a rule able to maintain their organisation, but their membership decreased. We must notice that there was in some areas a growth in the number of organizations, claiming the designation of trade unions. But many of these bodies were in practice little more than vehicles for the propagation of the views of those who founded them, who were unwilling or unable to undertake the difficult task of educating the workers in the principles which have secured the growth of trade unionism on sound lines in other countries. As might have been expected from the conditions of the period under review, there was a marked diminution of industrial unrest. Although the cost of living was everywhere lower than in the preceding year, and appreciably below the standard of 1921, wages which had risen generally during 1921, were not infrequently maintained at their previous level. The first important reduction took place in the Ahmedabad Cotton Mills ; and was only effective after one of the largest strikes which have occurred in India. The number of operatives involved amounted to 48,000 ; nearly all the mills remained closed from the 1st April till the 4th June ; and it was not till some weeks after the settlement that normal activity was resumed. Fortunately this was the only labour dispute of any magnitude. The total number of strikes reported during the year was 214 as against 280 in the preceding year and above 400 in 1921. The great majority of these strikes were unsuccessful. A reference to the diagrams on the opposite page will serve to illustrate the course of trade disputes in India throughout the past three years. The number of strikes has shown a fairly steady downward tendency for the greater part of the period ; and there has been a corresponding tendency to diminution in the number of days work lost. This has however been partly obscured by two large strikes—the East Indian Railway strike in the first quarter of 1922, and the Ahmedabad Mill strike of June 1923.

Little Progress in 1923.

Strikes.

International Labour.

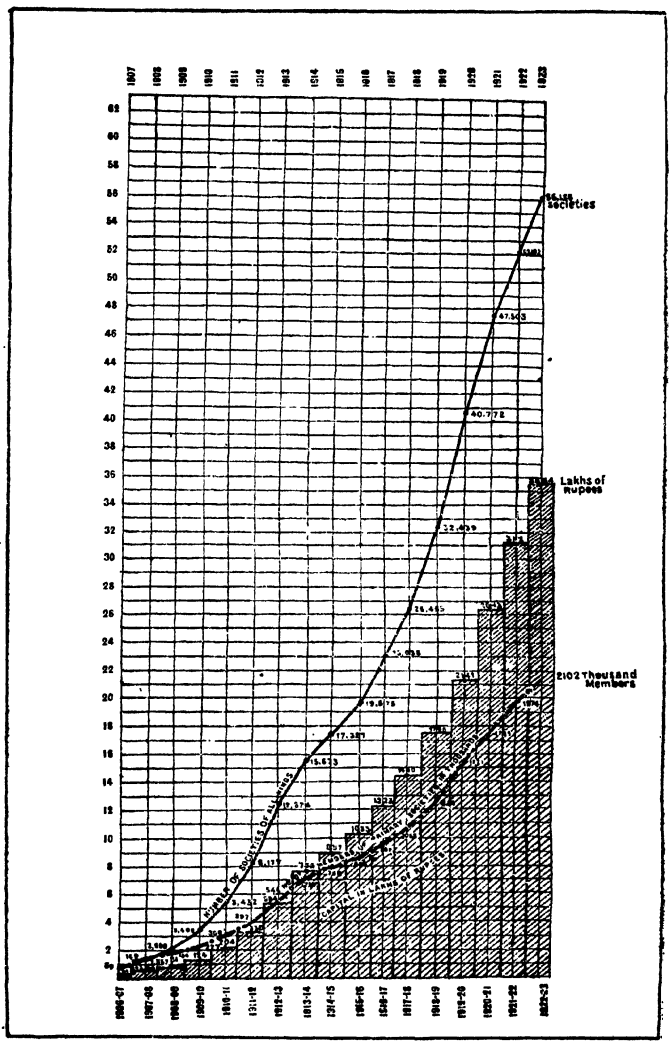
As a member of the League of Nations, India has of late been obliged to consider and take action upon various draft conventions affecting labour. These conventions have been of considerable influence in moulding the provisions of the Factories Act and the Mines Act, to which reference has already been made. A convention designed to safeguard young persons employed at sea has also been approved by the Legislature. India is now recognised as among the eight chief industrial States of the world; and her obligations from the International standpoint are therefore on the increase. During the year under review, she was called upon to take notice of the recommendation of the Fifth Session of the International Labour Conference regarding the general principles of the organization of factory inspection. This recommendation, when studied in detail, was found to conform closely to the accepted principles of factory administration in India; the great majority of the suggestions having already found a place in the law and practice in force in the country. In certain minor particulars in which the Indian system of factory inspection is not in complete accord with the recommendations, these have been brought by the Government of India to the notice of Local Administrations.

The Co-operative Movement.

From the brief survey undertaken in the earlier pages of this chapter, it will be plain that the most pressing need of India of to-day is a systematic movement for economic uplift among the masses, both urban and rural. The stimulus to such an uplift does not at present exist among the people themselves; and the Administration alone cannot do very much to encourage it. If success is to be achieved, continuous and well-directed efforts on the part of the authorities must be supplemented by an impluse towards self-improvement on the part of the masses. Probably the most powerful stimulating agency in this direction is to be found in the co-operative movement. This movement is only some fifteen years old; and the remarkable progress which it has achieved in this short time may be gathered from the diagram on the opposite page. It was originally introduced into India with the object of providing capital for agriculture; but it soon became clear that what the country really wanted was not so much capital itself as instruction in the wise use of it. As we have already noticed, there are few things more important for the economic welfare of the nation than the encouragement of thrift; but it is only lately that much attention has been devoted to the subject. Co-operative societies now place the encouragement of thrift among

DIAGRAM 23.

Progress of Co-operative Movement in India, 1907-23.



Note.—Capital is increasing faster than membership, being now nearly Rs. 100 per member, and the average membership per society is now 97. The capital is Rs. 6,221 per society.

their primary objects, rendering valuable service by the collection of small shares, by receiving deposits, and by attempting to induce members to make compulsory contributions for special purposes. Further, agricultural non-credit societies are playing an increasing part in the rural life of India. They deal with such matters as the joint sale of agricultural produce, the production and sale of implements and manures, the furtherance of irrigation projects, and the consolidation of holdings. They open dispensaries and schools; they assist the Agricultural Departments in spreading of improved methods of cultivation; they maintain communications, and they build new roads.

Its Aims.

The steady growth of public confidence in the potentialities of the movement has been well exemplified by the manner in which it has survived the troubles of recent years. During 1921 and 1922, the whole political atmosphere of India was antagonistic to the purpose and ideals underlying co-operation. Despite these unfavourable conditions, the co-operative movement continued to make satisfactory progress through the whole period. It is still only at the beginning of its career; for at the end of the year 1922-23, the latest date for which complete figures are available, there were only 56,136 societies of all kinds throughout the country. This gave for British India an average of just over 21 societies for every 100,000 inhabitants; and for the four Indian States, Mysore, Baroda, Hyderabad and Bhopal, where the co-operative system has taken root, an average of just over 20 societies per 100,000 of the population. The total all-India membership in 1921-22 amounted to 2·1 millions, and the total working capital to Rs. 3,553 lakhs, while the profits accruing from the operations of the primary societies totalled nearly Rs. 64 lakhs.

Present Development.

In certain Provinces the scope of the co-operative movement has extended to a remarkable degree. In the Punjab, for example, the Co-operative Department no longer confines itself to the provision of rural credit; but includes in its investigations all the problems that arise in the application of economics to agriculture. In collaboration on the one hand, with the Standing Board of Economic Enquiry, and the Agricultural and Veterinary Department; and with the actual cultivator on the other, it conducts enquiries into all matters affecting the welfare of the agriculturalist. Indeed, on the basis of the co-operative movement, a real school of rural economics is being built up in the Punjab. Among the more prominent of its activities we may mention the consolidation

Lines of Progress; The Punjab.

of holdings. The work which is being done in uniting the strips of cultivation scattered between different landowners in certain Punjab villages has attracted the attention of economists all over India. The chief progress has been made in the central districts of the province.

Consolidation of Holdings.

In one village, consolidated last year, the rent of the area treated is reported to have doubled; in another, 62 acres of old waste has come under cultivation as a result of readjustment. It is indeed claimed that in another area as a result of repartition, 1,750 acres of waste, which was previously tiny scattered plots, unsuitable for ploughing, has been brought under cultivation. Another gain frequently resulting from the consolidation of scattered holdings is that an owner's land can be collected round his well, so that the actual area irrigated is increased. In another direction also, the co-operative movement in the Punjab has broken valuable ground. Here as elsewhere, the ordinary village society is only in a position to finance loans for agricultural operations, which can be repaid within a year. But for redeeming the heavy mortgage debt of the Province, and the financing of big schemes of agricultural expansion, longer term credits are required. A commencement has been made in this latter direction by the Jhang Mortgage Bank, which Government has assisted to the extent of one lakh of rupees. Recently proposals have been made for the establishment of a Provincial Co-operative Bank to be run on purely co-operative lines. By thus pooling their resources, central banks will be able to obtain more credit than at present, while the Provincial Bank will also be in a position to deal directly with the headquarters of the Imperial Bank. By the issue of debentures it will be able to finance long-term credit, and so to fulfil the functions of the mortgage bank at present so urgently needed by the agriculturalists of the Province. A further direction in which advance is proceeding is that of co-operative marketing. The Lyallpore Co-operative Commission Sale Shops are now arranging to advance 75 per cent. of the value of all grain which is brought in. They make arrangements to store grain when they are requested to do so. As a result the landowner is relieved from the necessity of disposing of his grain at an artificially low price immediately after harvesting; and can afford to wait until the price represents a fair return. He is also released from the grasp of the commission agent, to whom in return for loans, he was previously compelled to dispose of his crop for far less than its market value. The success of these commission shops may be judged from the fact that while

Banking.

Co-operative Sale.

DIAGRAM 24.

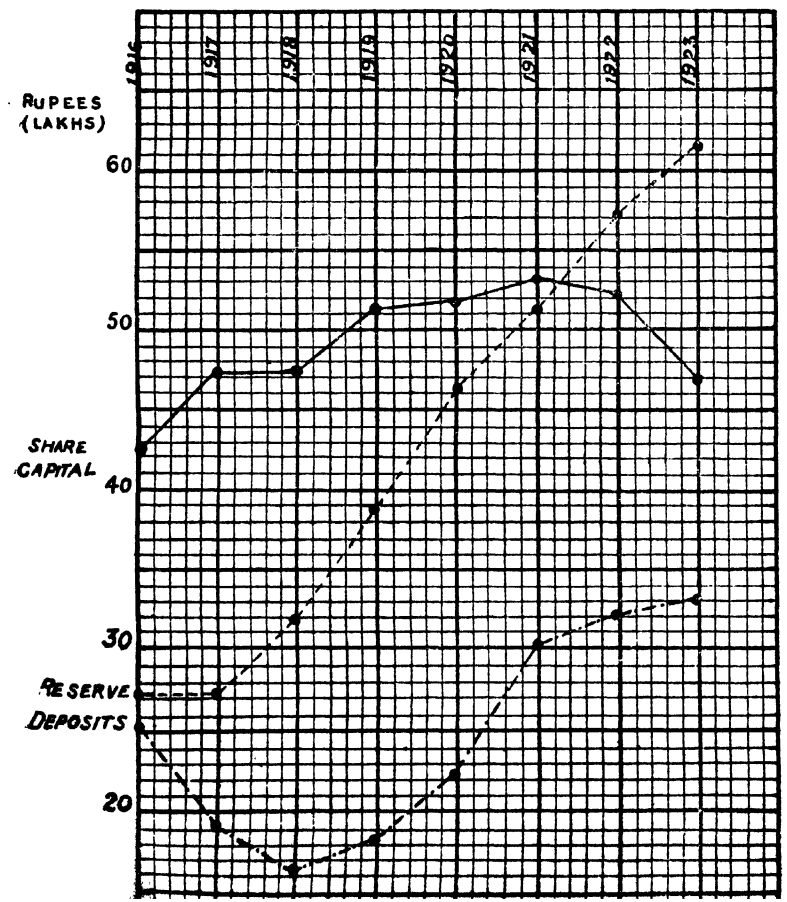
Growth of Thrift in the Punjab.

Showing share Capital Reserve and Deposit in Agricultural Societies from 1916-23.

NOTE] 1.—Deposits declined in 1918 at the crisis of the great War owing to counter attraction of war loan ; rose rapidly in succeeding years ; nearly stationary during last two years owing to lack of funds for extending movement.

2.—Steady growth of Reserve Funds.

3.—Rise in share capital as movement extended ; recent decline owing to repayments after 10 years.



sales totalled Rs. 4 lakhs in 1921-22, in 1922-23 they amounted to no less than Rs. 29½ lakhs. The general progress of the movement in the Punjab has of late been hindered by financial stringency. The present expenditure by Government amounts only to Rs. 4¼ lakhs per annum. At the same time, the number of societies has risen from 8,415 in 1921 to 9,530 in 1923. During the same period the membership has risen from 239,000 to 256,000 and the working capital from Rs. 361 lakhs to Rs. 472 lakhs. The general effect of the movement in encouraging the growth of thrift can be gathered from the diagram on the opposite page.

United Provinces.

In the United Provinces, during the period under review, the Co-operative Department was mainly concentrated on the task of consolidating the progress already achieved. Gradual and orderly development was preferred to the multiplication of new societies; and no expansion was allowed in localities where arrangements for proper financial supervision could not be ensured. Notwithstanding this, three central banks, 436 agricultural and 28 non-agricultural societies were registered during the year. In general, we may notice that transactions between central banks were reduced; a symptom of their growing independence and ability to raise capital for their own local requirements. All the central banks were required to keep adequate fluid resources to meet maturing liabilities; and those which had insufficient funds were not allowed to start new societies. Unfortunately, despite the efforts of the Department in pressing upon the banks the need of teaching societies the importance of punctuality in the repayment of loans, the arrears against primary societies increased from 18·7 per cent. to 20·7 per cent. It is recorded that non-credit societies have shown little improvement. Stores in particular suffered from lack of interest on the part of members, as well as from market fluctuation, with the result that several had to be closed. Apparently members of co-operative societies generally speaking, proved to be either unwilling or incapable of making the sustained efforts necessary to manage joint business of this kind. The progress of the co-operative movement in the United Provinces continues, on the whole to be satisfactory. Between 1922 and 1923 the number of societies rose from 5,128 to 5,500, the membership from 133,350 to 141,634 and the working capital from Rs. 144 lakhs to Rs. 161 lakhs.

Bihar and Orissa.

In Bihar and Orissa progress continues steady. The number of societies increased from 4,261 to 5,130 between 1921-22 and 1922-23. During the same period, membership rose from 136,000 to 163,000, and working capital from

Rs. 165 lakhs to Rs. 219 lakhs. At the end of the year under review, the number of societies of all kinds in existence was 5,865; and the growth of public confidence in the movement is proved by the increase in the total deposits held by various central banks and societies from Rs. 63 lakhs to Rs. 88 lakhs. The older of these bodies have now reached a stage of great financial stability, numbers of them obtaining all the deposits they want within their own areas, without assistance from the provincial banks. The last four years have shown a steady decrease in the number of societies classed as "bad." These now stand at less than 10 per cent. of the total as against 16 per cent. in 1919-20. Co-ordination between the Co-operative Department and other Departments of Government, especially that of Agriculture, continues to improve. Nearly all central banks and unions have commenced the distribution of improved seeds and manures among members of their affiliated societies. In some cases these operations, of which the importance will be obvious, are assuming large dimensions. Another hopeful indication of progress is the constitution of Divisional Development Boards, consisting of representatives of the Co-operative, Agricultural, Industrial and Veterinary Departments, together with non-officials who take an interest in this work. A committee has been appointed by Government to consider the future supervision of the movement, and the amount of State aid required.

Bengal.

In Bengal, the total number of societies of all classes rose during the year under review from 6,679 to 7,822, an increase of no less than 17 per cent. The total membership rose from just over 260,000 to just under 293,000; while working capital increased from 368 lakhs to Rs. 433 lakhs. The Provincial Co-operative Bank enjoyed a year of great prosperity, the working capital rising from Rs. 25 lakhs to Rs. 34 lakhs, and deposits received from the public rising from Rs. 38 lakhs to Rs. 87 lakhs. The co-operative irrigation movement made good progress during the year; and several interesting schemes have been carried out through the initiative of the members. The number of milk societies has increased; and they have succeeded in obtaining an assured position through their excellent management. Here as elsewhere save in the Punjab, the stores movement showed few signs of progress, and indeed experienced some instances of failure. Among other movements worthy of notice may be mentioned the increase of anti-malarial societies; the rise in the number of weavers' societies; and the advance made by the co-operative movement among fishermen. An attempt is now being made

to introduce methods of co-operative disposal; and the importance of fisheries societies, as the best available means of educating the fishermen and improving the industry, is now well recognised. We may also notice that the Bengal Co-operative Organization Society continues to bring out its two periodicals, besides publishing a number of pamphlets. Proposals are now on foot for the formation of Divisional Boards, with a view to bringing representatives of village societies in direct touch with the activities of the Central Body, and in fostering the development of village leadership. The information bureau attached to the Co-operative Department issued weekly bulletins to all societies of prices obtaining in the Calcutta market; while the Departmental museum proved of great assistance to industrial organizations in arranging for the supply of their requirements.

Madras.

In Madras, the number of co-operative societies continued to increase, primary societies standing at 6,514 in 1923, as against 5,494 in 1922. During the same period, membership rose from 328,000 to 374,000. Societies of all descriptions rose from 7,389 to 8,443, despite the fact that the work of weeding out bad societies was continued. The total working capital rose from Rs. 601 lakhs to Rs. 711 lakhs. The confidence of the general public in the soundness of the movement may be gauged from the fact that out of the total capital employed of Rs. 359 lakhs, no less than Rs. 253 lakhs was derived from the deposits of individuals, chiefly non-members. The movement has also made gratifying progress among the depressed classes, whose membership increased from 42,000 to 52,000 during the year. Much attention was devoted to the work of consolidation. The Departmental Inspectorate staff was divided into two branches, one attending only to the audit of societies, and the other to general organization, supervision and administration. Statutory rules were framed providing that all societies which accept deposits and loans should provide fluid resources, and that all societies should render certain annual statements in prescribed forms. The policy of bringing more and more primary societies under non-official supervision was continued. Societies which were working badly were reconstituted, and the activities of those who were becoming moribund were stimulated. The attitude of the general public continued to be very cordial. A Provincial Co-operative Congress was held at the beginning of the period under review, and there were six successful district conferences.

In Bombay, a Province where co-operation has of late flourished exceedingly, the total number of societies rose from 3,411 to 3,533 between 1922 and 1923. Membership increased from 327,000 to 335,000, and the working capital from Rs. 435 lakhs to Rs. 533 lakhs. There is still great room for expansion, as will be gathered from the fact that only 11 per cent. of the total number of agriculturalists who occupy Government land in the Presidency are members of credit societies. The advantages of the movement are however being increasingly perceived. From Sind, for example, it is reported that members of co-operative societies have altogether stopped their dealings with the village money lender. The local co-operative society shows signs of becoming the village rendezvous, where members meet and discuss matters of common interest. Local disputes and factions are brought to arbitration; and collections are made for works of public utility. A stimulus has been lent to the development of agricultural co-operation by the constitution of Divisional Boards. Much attention has been devoted by these bodies to non-credit societies; and constant endeavours are being made to encourage the growth of co-operative marketting and sales societies. This movement, which in all countries has been one of the later developments of co-operation, is but just beginning; and it is estimated that the present activities must be multiplied by about thirtyfold before the co-operative movement can be considered to have fulfilled its responsibilities in this direction. Cotton sales societies are already flourishing; and special societies dealing with the sale of miscellaneous grain, areca nut and chillies are beginning to show an increased turnover. But perhaps the most striking characteristic of the co-operative movement in Bombay is the recent development of co-operative banking. The movement has set before itself the aim of erecting, in every considerable town and in every district, banks which will help the artisan, the small professional man and the small trader; and which will at the same time, by popularising credit and the instruments of credit, abolish the present difficulties of conveying money from place to place. In view of the widespread illiteracy of the cultivator, which so greatly impedes progress, it is probably at present of the first importance to spread modern banking facilities through co-operation as rapidly as possible; and thereby prepare and arm the people for the new era of commercial agriculture into which they are already beginning to enter. Already considerable progress has been made. Three years ago, the central banks, including the Provincial

Bombay.

Co-operative Banking.

Bank, were 14 in number with a working capital of Rs. 65 lakhs. They are now 20 in number with a working capital of Rs. 169 lakhs. During the same period, urban banks have increased from 15 to 31, while their working capital has risen from Rs. 53 lakhs to Rs. 112 lakhs. The use of cheques is now being introduced and has already reached the considerable figure of 23,000, to the value of more than Rs. 6 crores. Compared with countries like the United States, or even the British Isles, where deposit banking and the use of cheques have been familiar for generations, these figures will of course appear insignificant. They do however represent substantial progress in increasing the money in circulation in the country, and thereby the wealth available at any moment. More important still, they stand for a real advance towards greater familiarity with modern business methods. Government has realised the importance of this development, and has given encouragement to the cheque system by exempting cheques issued by members of societies from stamp duty up to the value of Rs. 20. The Imperial Bank has also assisted in the same direction by agreeing to cash the cheques of district central banks, and of certain selected primary societies. Overlooking all the branches of co-operative enterprise throughout the Bombay Presidency is the Central Co-operative Institute. Four branches of this now exist, for Bombay City, for the Deccan, for the Carnatic, and for Gujarat. Training classes are held for college students and for the public, for honorary organizers, and for bank managers, for secretaries and for other workers paid and unpaid interested in co-operation. Good progress is being made in the publication of vernacular literature and in the popularisation of the principles for which co-operation stands. Regular programmes of inspection and lecturing tours of propaganda and instruction are organized; a co-operative quarterly magazine is published; and educational work, particularly in the direction of night schools is fostered.

Use of Cheques.

Among the lines of progress to which organized effort such as that embodied in the co-operative movement is already beginning to contribute, is one most necessary to the well-being of the Indian people, namely, sanitation. In previous Statements mention has been made of the difficulties with which sanitary reform in India is beset. If one may argue from the analogy of Europe and America, the necessary preliminary to any satisfactory advance in this direction is the growth among the educated classes of a missionary and humanitarian spirit which will lead them to

Sanitation.

consecrate time, money and energy to the task of ameliorating the conditions in which their less fortunate brethren live. Hitherto, in the face of widespread popular apathy, the meagre resources of Government have been able to accomplish but little. The problem is in the first instance educational, but the terms in which it is stated are so enormous that its solution is necessarily slow. A great change has to be introduced into the general ideas of the Indian people regarding hygiene; and the change is rendered more difficult by the fact that these ideas are intimately connected with religious and social customs. India can never be safeguarded from a heavy death rate, punctuated by disastrous epidemics, until her people can be weaned from their tenacious adherence to social observances which are as diametrically opposed to public health as they are to economic prosperity. With an increase in the receptivity of the educated classes to new ideas, and with the slow amelioration of the social and economic status of the masses, it should be possibly eventually to remedy India's backwardness in sanitary matters. But so revolutionary a progress cannot be accomplished in a day. The poverty of the Indian masses is a complicating factor; but it is far less serious as an obstacle than their social heritage. Diseases are still generally attributed to the wrath of heaven; and when sickness occurs, the Indian's first impulse is to propitiate offended deities rather than to disinfect his water supply, and to prevent the contamination of his food. Throughout town and country alike, even elementary sanitary knowledge is conspicuous by its absence; and until the value of fresh air, pure water, and wholesome food, can be appreciated by the Indian people, no real progress will be possible. It is in the Indian home, and particularly among Indian women, that a better knowledge and a keener appreciation of the elements of domestic and personal hygiene are most urgently required. For it is in this sphere that the old forces of tradition, and the innate conservatism of the people, combine to exercise their strongest opposition to the introduction of new and more healthful practices.

Special Difficulties.

Any radical amelioration of the sanitary condition of India requires two principal postulates. In the first place, the administrative agency must enjoy popular confidence, and must proceed along lines in conformity with the prevailing mental processes of the people. In the next place, this agency must supply the driving force necessary to overcome the dead weight to age-old inertia. So far as the first essential is concerned, it is probably in a fair way to be realised through the transfer of sanitation to

Conditions of Advance.

popular control. But the second requisite is still lamentably to seek in India. The number of Indian public men who have devoted their time, energy, and enthusiasm, to the improvement of the lot of their countrymen is comparatively small. During the last ten years, it is true, much has been done to improve the sanitation of the larger towns; but financial stringency has of late been responsible for failure to maintain progress. The opening up of congested areas, and the replanning of cities on better lines, are peculiarly difficult in India; for their expense is a very serious consideration in a poor country; and they meet with unenlightened opposition from those in whose interest they are mainly designed. Further, the sanitary activities of a municipality are not as a rule appreciated by the general public. The commonest regulations designed for the improvement of public health and public convenience frequently bring upon the heads of those responsible for them a heavy burden of unpopularity, for no other reason than the fact that they interfere with traditional habits and methods of livelihood. Such interference, even for the most benevolent of objects, with deep-rooted customs, is bitterly resented; with the result that sanitary regulations are as a rule proposed with timidity and enforced without zeal. In the matter of rural sanitation which affects the lives of some 90 per cent. of India's millions, very little has been accomplished. The average Indian village, as it has been said, is as a rule little better than a collection of insanitary dwellings situated on a dung-hill. Towards the improvement of these conditions, cooperation is already accomplishing something. The reformed local Governments are also directing attention to sanitary measures, and to the prevention of epidemic diseases. In Bengal, for example, every District Board save one, now possesses a fully qualified health officer, under whose guidance a large amount of useful work has been initiated. Local bodies in general are devoting increased energy to sanitation; but their efforts have been handicapped by financial difficulties. Public attention is, however, being gradually aroused to the importance of the whole matter. Organised propaganda work is commencing in rural areas through magic lantern lectures, concert parties, informal talks with villagers, and the distribution of pamphlets and leaflets prepared by the Public Health Departments. Perhaps the happiest augury for the future is to be found in the increasing attention now devoted to public health work in the more advanced Provinces by voluntary agencies.

Obstacles to Sanitary Reform.

Urban.

Rural.

In Bengal, for example, there are some 90 anti-malarial societies in the existence, which in addition to their primary function of malaria prevention, undertake valuable educational work among the masses for the encouragement of more hygenic conditions.

Among the most pressing problems of India's health is that presented by the appalling infant mortality. It has been calculated that every year no fewer than 2 million Indian babies die. Indeed, although birth registration is still too inaccurate to make precise figures reliable, it may be stated with confidence that one in five, or perhaps even one in four, of the infants born in India die within the first year of life. In crowded cities, particularly industrial cities, the rate is even more lamentable. Fortunately, both administrative and voluntary effort is being increasingly directed to the necessity for remedial measures. The Infant Welfare Movement, which owed much to the All-India Maternity and Infant Welfare League initiated by Lady Chelmsford, has made excellent progress under the patronage of Lady Reading, who, during the year 1923, inaugurated an All-India Baby Week, with the object of educating Indian mothers in the better rearing of infants, and in the reduction of infantile mortality. The exhibitions, the lectures, and the baby shows which took place in this connection, in all the most important centres of India, have done very much to arouse public interest. Most hopeful sign of all, must be counted the fact that Indian ladies are beginning to take up the work of child welfare. In this sphere, we may again refer to the labours of the Poona Seva Sadan. At its headquarters, child welfare work is being conducted upon highly practical lines. Further, the efforts of the National Association for Supplying Female Medical Aid to the Women of India continue to produce good results. This organization is supported by the authorities, and now receives a subsidy of Rs. 3·7 lakhs from Central revenues. The Countess of Reading has initiated a scheme for training Indian nurses and doctors in larger numbers, which should do much to improve the situation as time goes on. But the magnitude of the field of child welfare work in India is such, that despite devoted labour from many quarters, the problem is still scarcely in a way to solution. If any appreciable reduction is to be made in the mortality of young children, work on a scale hitherto without precedent must be undertaken.

Child Welfare.

"Baby Week."

Of immediate bearing upon the progress of sanitation in India is the advance of medical research. Throughout the year, financial

stringency has continued seriously to hinder developments in this field. The appointments of Director of Medical Research and Epidemiological Statistician under the Central Government, have had to be held temporarily in abeyance. The activities of the Indian Research Association have had to be curtailed, and certain enquiries terminated for want of funds. The Association has none the less continued to conduct important investitigations into such diseases as kala azar, malaria, leprosy, relapsing and typhus fevers, among the other epidemics with which India is afflicted. The School of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene in Calcutta, which owes its inception to Sir Leonard Rogers, has continued to do excellent work. It is now fully equipped to discharge the duties for which it was established; and investigations into hook-worm and kala azar, bowel disease, leprosy, and certain other complaints of frequent occurrence in the tropics, are being conducted.

Medical Research.

Closely connected with the problems of sanitation, in many of which are involved the customs and habits of the people, is the question of social reform.

Perhaps in few spheres of human activity have the democratic ideals encouraged by the War proved of more benefit than in the impetus they have afforded to social reform in India. The more characteristic problems of the country may be said to centre round the institution of caste. Originally concerned with the preservation of ceremonial purity in social relations, the caste system has in course of ages developed into an institution which assigns inexorably to each individual his position and his duties in the structure of orthodox Hinduism. The essence of its working is that a Hindu is not affected by anything which is done outside his caste; thus not merely individuals but whole classes of humanity, are separated, as it were, into watertight compartments; and some of them are subjected by immemorial tradition to degrading disabilities at once hereditary and inevitable. Indeed among the most difficult aspects of the whole problem is the elevation of the depressed classes, or so-called "untouchables", who form more than one-fifth of the entire population. At present large numbers of them are obliged to reside, in conditions of almost animal squalor, beyond the purlieus of cities and villages. They may not draw water from public wells, they may not enter the houses of people belonging to the touchable classes, and in some Provinces they may not even use the public streets. They are denied the use of temples and inns; their

Social Reforms.

The Depressed Classes.

children are not customarily admitted into the ordinary schools; and when admitted, are made to sit apart from others who would be polluted by their mere touch. These disabilities though primarily social, extend to the minutest operations of daily life; so that a labourer or agriculturalist belonging to the depressed classes is constantly a loser in ordinary commercial operations through his inability to enter a shop or even to pass through a street where shopkeepers dwell. Social ostracism so degrading, persisting through immemorial centuries, has naturally constituted a most serious obstacle to manliness, independence, and capacity for self help. In consequence, millions of people exist in conditions so insanitary that it is not easy even for the most liberal-minded members of higher castes to think of them in terms of equality. But what stands most in the way of the depressed classes is the social tradition observed by the great majority of the caste community. In theory many of the most galling disabilities under which the outcastes labour have already been removed by legislation or by administrative enactment. But in practice they persist; and they will not disappear until the social sense of the whole Indian people advances to a level at which these heritages from a more primitive age will be recognised as a slur upon the good name of the community at large. In this connection, it is important to notice the gradual awakening of the public conscience in the matter of untouchability. The injunctions which Mr. Gandhi gave to his followers concerning the necessity for the elevation of the depressed classes, may well be ranked by the future historian as among the most fruitful consequences of his remarkable campaign. His influence unquestionably served to arouse wide-spread interest in this grave social problem. In the course of the year under review, the Hindu Maha Sabha, after a protracted discussion, unanimously passed a resolution removing from the untouchables the ban in regard to schools, public wells, meeting places and temples. Whether it will be possible to give early effect to this pronouncement remains to be seen. But it is at least highly significant that a body so representative of orthodox Hinduism should definitely commit itself to the furthering of ideas which, but a few years ago, would have seemed too heterodox even for discussion. We may also notice that shortly after the close of the period with which we are now dealing, a Satyagraha campaign was inaugurated within the boundaries of an Indian State, under the direction of certain of Mr. Gandhi's disciples, for the purpose of demonstrating the right of untouchables to proceed along a certain

Awakening of the Public Conscience.

road, from the use of which they had previously been debarred by caste Hindus.

Class Consciousness.

The philanthropic work which is now gradually being undertaken by voluntary agency for the uplift of the depressed classes, is being reinforced by organised self-assertion on the part of these classes themselves. Of late, their economic position has improved. They are beginning to cast their eyes beyond the immediate surroundings of their daily toil; and resentment is replacing the acquiescence of centuries. Particularly in Provinces like Madras, where caste restrictions are still all-powerful, conferences are now from time to time held which are widely attended by representative members of the depressed communities. The proceedings of these meetings reveal a fixed determination towards political, social, economic and moral uplift; combined with a steady resolve to resent the invasion of those natural rights to which as human beings they consider themselves entitled. There is much plain-speaking concerning the unsanitary habits and the educational backwardness which prevent the depressed classes from rising in the world. These conferences though primarily social and economic, are not without their political bearing. Generally speaking, there is a strong feeling of gratitude towards the existing Administration on account of its impartial treatment of all classes, and its sustained efforts to assist those whom the caste system would condemn to hereditary degradation.

State and Voluntary effort.

Indeed, the problem of the depressed classes has for long been occupying the attention of Government. Everything that can be done by legislation has been done; and so far as the letter of the Law is concerned, there is nothing to prevent a member of these classes from rising to the highest position open to any Indian. Systematic efforts have been made to encourage the spread of cooperation among them, and to give them the benefit of increased educational facilities. In many Provinces, special scholarships are provided for them; allowances are made for the purchase of books and other educational requirements; and stress is laid upon the right of the outcastes to participate in the educational machinery by which their more fortunate brethren have for so long profited. The consequence of these efforts is now apparent. Although the proportion of depressed class pupils is still infinitesimal in view of the size of their community, the numbers under instruction are everywhere rising. In this benevolent work, voluntary agency has been particularly active. The work of the various Christian missionary

societies is beyond all praise. Not only have they established a large number of schools for the education of the depressed classes, but in addition, they have resolutely insisted that pupils from this social stratum shall be admitted side by side with members of the higher castes into colleges under missionary control. By this means a body of public opinion has been created which recognises that the depressed classes have a claim to be treated as fellow human beings. Excellent work is now being carried on by a number of societies other than Christian in their inspiration.

Lower Castes.

The gradual change which is coming over the position of the depressed classes is also beginning to affect the status of other ranks above them in the social scale. The traditional weakness of the lower castes is disappearing; they are beginning to recognise and to avenge social tyranny. As has been pointed out in previous Statements, the lower castes in one Province, namely Madras, have taken advantage of the Reformed Constitution to assert themselves against the ancient intellectual oligarchy of the Brahmans and to seize political power in their own hands. The full significance of an event so momentous can hardly be estimated at the present time, but its influence upon the progress of India towards democratic institutions must necessarily be profound. It seems scarcely too much to say that the first bulwark of caste dominance in political matters has been carried by assault.

Social Conferences.

During the period under review, various important social conferences were held. In November 1923, the All-India Social Workers Conference met in Bombay. A number of important resolutions were passed, dealing with the training of social workers; the co-ordination of social work; the uplift of the depressed classes; the reclamation of criminal tribes; the social evil; and public health. A very significant resolution was that which called upon the universities of India to organise general courses of lectures on community—life and social work; and to provide opportunities of theoretical training for social workers. Next month, the National Social Conference was held at Poona under the auspices of the Liberal Federation. This meeting dealt more specifically with the encouragement of social reform among the Hindu community. It deliberately recorded its opinion that the caste system constitutes a serious obstacle to the growth of industrial, social and political life, and as such is antagonistic to national unity. It also endorsed the principle of the removal of untouchability; of inter-caste marriage; of the abolition of early-

marriage; and of the education of women. It further emphatically protested against the continuance of such anti-social customs and practices as wasteful wedding expenditure, excessive dowries and the system of the seclusion of women. Resolutions even more radical in form were passed in the same month by the All-India Social Conference, which was held at Cocanada under the aegis of the Indian National Congress. The Presidential address contained some very plain speaking as to the artificial and ceremonial purity encouraged by orthodox Hinduism at the cost of true physical and scientific cleanliness. The problem of the depressed classes was dealt with in language equally forcible; and resolutions declaring that the caste system must be abolished; that untouchability must cease; that educational facilities must be extended to women; and that injurious marriage customs must be done away with, were carried with enthusiasm. The task of translating these and other resolutions into practice is, as will be realised from what has already been said, of the utmost difficulty; but it should not be forgotten that an advance of some importance has been made when the acknowledged leaders of Hindu thought commit themselves so uncompromisingly to the principle of radical reform.

The social problems of India are by no means confined to the lower castes, or to the depressed classes strictly so called. There are certain communities known as criminal tribes, whose hereditary occupation is crime of one kind or another, burglary, highway robbery or even assassination. Towards the uplift of these unfortunate beings, who are a positive danger to the community as a whole, the Administration has for long laboured. Criminal tribes are concentrated into settlements, managed either by Government or by some such organization as the Salvation Army. Here they are reclaimed, subjected to kind but firm supervision and assisted to gain a decent livelihood. Perhaps more important than all from the point of view of their ultimate reclamation from the attractions of their hereditary pursuits, is the system which has been adopted of influencing the younger generation. Special efforts are made to teach skilled trades to boys and to young men; to find them employment; and to enable them to become self-supporting and self-respecting members of society. With the adults, all that can be done in most cases is to restrain their tendencies towards hereditary crime by keeping them working at some honest occupation under strict but kindly supervision.

Criminal Tribes.

In addition to the problems we have already mentioned, there are certain specific characteristics of Indian life which are particularly

repugnant to the social reformer. For example, the seclusion of women behind the parda, which is semi-universal in the middle and upper classes of society, operates as a great drag both upon the economic and educational progress of India. Fortunately, the last few years seem to have witnessed a steadily increasing emancipation of Indian women from the restrictions under which they have for centuries laboured. They are now displaying growing interest in political and social questions; are assuming increasing prominence on the platform; are showing much zeal in the cause of temperance, infant welfare, and other philanthropic activities. Increasing numbers both of Hindu and Muslim ladies now mix in society under the cover of the veil; while at political and social gatherings, the number of seats reserved for women is on the increase. But progress is very slow; for the parda system is considered fashionable; and no sooner does a class of society which has not hitherto observed this custom rise in the economic scale, than the seclusion of women is gradually introduced as being something which is a hall-mark of respectibility. Greater progress is being made towards the amelioration of certain other features of Indian life to which the reformer takes exception. The conscience of the public is now gradually awakening to the serious implication of the early age of marriage generally prevalent; and the year has witnessed certain attempts to introduce legislation for the remedy of the more obvious evils. The movement for the re-marriage of widows is also making steady if slow progress; and a number of voluntary societies, such as the Hindu Widow Reform League of Lucknow, are engaging in unostentatious but philanthropic work. The magnitude of this problem may be gauged from the statement that in India there are probably at the present time more than 300,000 Hindu widows under the age of 15 years.

The Parda System.

Marriage and Widowhood.

In the preceding pages a brief outline has been given of some of the more characteristic difficulties which attend the social reformer in India. We must now briefly consider two problems almost universal in their scope, the problem of drink and the problem of drugs. The problem of drink as visualised by Western reformers is almost unknown in India, save in those few places where heavy concentrations of industrial workers occur. This is largely due to the fact that in the majority of the communities which make up the Indian people, indulgence in strong drink, unlike indulgence in intoxicating drugs, is severely reprobated. But the per capita figure of

The Drink Problem.

consumption for drugs as well as for liquor is very low. The excise revenue per head, including what the State derives from both sources, varied in 1922-23 from 5 annas in the United Provinces to Rs. 2-4 in Bombay. Between these two extremes came 7 annas in Bihar, 8 annas in the Punjab, 10 annas in the Central Provinces, 12 annas in Assam, and Rs. 1-3 in Madras. During the year 1922-23 there appears to have been an appreciable decline in excise revenue in almost every Province in India. In the majority of instances the Local Governments are now taking drastic steps to decrease consumption. There is also a strong anti-liquor movement which has increased in vehemence as a result of the non-co-operation campaign. During the year 1921-22, as was noticed in a previous Statement, the unregulated zeal of prohibitionists was responsible for two consequences, neither of which was calculated to advance the real interests of temperance. In the first place, the attacks which were made upon those who took any part in the trade in licit liquor, drove much of the consumption underground. Illicit liquor flourished; and in almost every Province, prosecutions for the breach of excise regulations increased enormously. The difficulty was enhanced by the fact that sources of illicit supply are far more accessible in India than in any European country. In many districts liquor can be had from almost any palm tree, with no more skill than is required to cut an incision, and with no more apparatus than a knife and a toddy-pot. As a result of the boycotting and picketting of liquor shops, certain classes of the population in several provinces joyfully betook themselves to prohibited sources of supply. Moreover, in the second place, the political associations of the non-co-operation campaign led to the prevalence of distorted views even in the matter of temperance. The idea spread that Government creates and fosters a demand for drink, which would cease automatically if the State were only ready to forego the Excise Revenue. The fact that Government steps in to regulate consumption hardly seems to have been considered. The real policy of the State, as it is hardly necessary to say, is that of maximum revenue from minimum consumption. Every care is taken to minimise temptation for those who do not drink, and to discourage excess among those who do. Government intervention indeed, operates to regulate both the quality and the quantity of the liquor consumed——quality by the prescription of a certain standard of strength, and quantity by the levy of still-head fees which the consumer ultimately pays. Since excise is now a transferred subject, the

Influence of Non-Co-operation.

Government Policy.

reformed Local Governments have been put into a position to place a heavy duty upon licit spirits. It is yet too early to say whether the raising of the retail price to a high figure will not defeat the ends in view by increasing the production and consumption of inferior illicit spirits. In this connection, reference may be made to a very interesting experiment now being carried out in Bombay. An attempt has there been made to reduce consumption of country liquor by strict limitation of the quantity that might be sold, in addition to employing the methods previously enforced. For the nine months April to December 1922, the quantity of liquor which might be sold in each shop was reduced by 10 per cent. in Bombay, and by 5 per cent. in the mofussil, below the sales of 1920-21. For the 15 months January 1923 to March 1924, the quantity was further reduced below the 1921-22 figure by another 10 per cent in Bombay and 5 per cent in the mofussil. The consequence of this policy was remarkable. The total quantity sold was less by half a million gallons than even the reduced total permissible. This was however accompanied by quite unprecedented increases in the use of illicit liquor in areas where it could be obtained without much difficulty. Cases of illicit distillation and sale and import rose to 2,884 from 1905 in the previous year. There was also a remarkable increase, amounting to no less than 2·8 million gallons, in the consumption of toddy. A heavy strain was thrown upon the Preventive Department; and with all their efforts they were unable to cope effectively with the illicit distiller and importer. It also seems clear that excise crime is continuing to increase; for the returns of illicit distillation and possession for April 1923 show 481 cases as against 309 in the corresponding months of 1922. An Excise Committee appointed by the Bombay Government has lately published a report which shows no weakening in the determination to extirpate the drink evil. The report recommends the adoption of total prohibition as the declared goal, and drastic proposals are being put forward for the achievement of this end. It is needless to say that the Bombay experiment is being watched with close attention throughout India. Should it succeed, a great impetus will be supplied to the propaganda of those who maintain that it is within the power of Government to make India "dry" by legislative enactment. It seems however plain from the results already achieved, that the process, should it prove to be practicable, will be attended by very heavy expenditure upon preventive staff, as well as by difficulties far greater than are generally recognised.

The Bombay Experiment.

While the drink problem has excited considerable attention in India during the period under review, the problem of drugs, and particularly of opium, has engaged the notice rather of external critics. As we have already mentioned, the consumption of opium excites but little reprobation in India, provided that its use is not carried to immoderate lengths. Indeed, the whole position of opium, in particular, is so different in India and in Western countries, that there is grave danger of the situation being obscured by the well-meant efforts of philanthropists who have no first-hand knowledge of Indian facts. Broadly speaking, the opium position is in outline like this. The soil of most parts of India will produce the opium poppy; and the people of the country had habituated themselves for many centuries before the arrival of the British, to the consumption of this drug in small quantities. They connect it, and in some measure justifiably, with medicinal properties. They have used it from time immemorial on certain ceremonial occasions. They cannot and will not be broken of the habit suddenly. The total consumption per head per annum only amounts to 26 grains; for opium is rarely smoked in India, but is employed as a household remedy, and on certain occasions as a refreshment. As in the case of drink, the policy of Government is to control the trade in such a way as to ensure its most effective regulation, and to prevent it from passing into the hands of the type of persons, with which it would readily, if uncontrolled, become associated. For over a century, the authorities have been engaged in the gradual acquisition of control over the production, transit and sale of the drug throughout the continent. This has been done by the practical concentration of the cultivation, so far as British India is concerned, within restricted areas; by the discontinuance of cultivation in many Indian States as the outcome of negotiations; and by the inclusion of the different Provinces in the general system as the necessity for regulation became manifest. The success of this policy is proved by the fact that while the revenue from opium steadily rises, both production and consumption steadily decline decade by decade. Enhanced prices and restricted supplies are causing opium to be used less and less for ceremonial hospitality or for personal indulgence; and are tending to restrict its consumption to purposes more strictly medicinal. A typical example of this process is found in the figures for the Madras Presidency. In 1911-12 the consumption of opium was 42·6 thousand seers, producing to the State a revenue of Rs. 0·13 crores. In 1920-21 the consumption

Drugs.

Opium.

Government's Policy.

had declined to 36·2 thousand seers, while the revenue had risen to Rs. 0·26 crores. It must further be remembered that since the introduction of the reformed system of Government, the consumption of opium in India has been controlled by Indian ministers in every Province save Assam. The statement occasionally made by ignorant critics, that Government is forcing opium down the throats of a reluctant people, corrupting souls and ruining bodies for its own selfish purposes, has thus not even the merit of plausibility. Indians themselves are now fully empowered, if they so desire, to restrict the use of opium in their own country. There is still, it is true, a certain amount of smuggling from the Indian States into British India. But the Indian States are now steadily coming into line; and legislative measures necessary to give effect to the provisions of the International Opium Convention have now been brought into effect in many of them. It must however be clearly realised that apart from such arrangements may be entered into with the Indian States under treaty obligations, the Government of India has no means of enforcing upon them any policy of suppressing or restricting the cultivation of opium.

Popular Control.

The policy of Government so far as the consumption of opium in India is concerned must be counted definitely successful; but the world in general is far more interested in the export of Indian opium to other countries. Here again, there is considerable misapprehension of the real position. It is forgotten that India is only one of the four great and several small opium-producing countries of the world. Of these Persia and Turkey stand outside the Hague Convention altogether; while China, for whose emancipation from the drug evil India sacrificed a former revenue of £4 million per annum, now produces something like 80 per cent of the world's crop. The fact is that from the year 1915, the Government of India has continuously pursued the policy of endeavouring to supply opium direct to the Governments of consuming countries. As a result of steady perseverance, India now sells roughly three-quarters of her total exports of opium direct to responsible Governments. And it is important to remember that as regards the balance of approximately one-quarter, the control of the importing Government remains absolute and unimpaired. No obligations are imposed to take a minimum quantity. The Government of India, so far from pressing its opium on any country, does not allow opium to leave the ports, unless the Government of the territory to which the con-

Opium Export.

Rigid Control.

signment is going certifies that the opium so to be exported is required for legitimate purposes. India indeed exports no opium to any country which prohibits import; she exports no opium in excess of quantities which the government of the consuming country desires to admit; and she has in practice voluntary placed limit on exports from India irrespective of what the particular demands may be. She does not now, nor has she at any time, exported dangerous drugs such as morphia, heroin, cocaine and the like, to America, as she has not infrequently been accused of doing. Further, India has loyally and faithfully carried out the provisions of the Hague Convention; in which particular her conduct might well serve as an example to many other countries interested in the opium traffic. That there is considerable misconception regarding her true attitude has been apparent from time to time. It is only with difficulty that she has been able to make her position clear before the League of Nations. At its first session, the Assembly of the League had recommended the appointment of an Advisory Committee to make suggestions regarding the more effective execution of the Hague Convention. At the second session, the committee proposed the appointment of a board of enquiry which would investigate and report on the quantity of opium required for strictly medicinal purposes; and thus enable the League ultimately to restrict the cultivation of opium to this amount. The Indian Delegates lodged a protest, in that the recommendation took no account of the fact that in several countries the usage of centuries sanctions the employment of opium in circumstances which traditional empiricism fully justifies. They further pointed out that India was the one important opium-producing country which had rigorously observed and even improved upon, the recommendations of the Hague Convention. The Indian view was that the more effective observance of the terms of the Convention should for the present be the object of the League's efforts, but if any enquiry were to be launched, its scope should be defined so as to include all legitimate usages of the drug. In a meeting of the Assembly of the League of Nations in 1923, the matter came up once more. The representatives of India on the Opium Commission at Geneva found it necessary to put forward the reservation that the use of opium according to the established practice of their country was not illegiminate under the Convention. Indeed in view of the customs of India, it is difficult to see what other attitude they could have assumed.

Misconception of India's Attitude.

The League of Nations.

From many points of view it appears plain that the problems discussed in the preceding chapter may be grouped round one single central issue, which is education. Only if the ideas of the people can be enlarged, and their outlook extended beyond the narrow bounds in which tradition at present confines them, does it seem possible for India to develop the energy necessary for the attainment alike of economic and political well-being. Failing such a change, the masses of the population must continue poor and ignorant; the women-folk must remain for the most part consumers rather than producers, adding little either to intellectual or to material wealth; the progress of sanitation, and the conquest of disease must be indefinitely postponed. In short, without a widespread system of education of a kind adapted at once to her capacity and to her needs, India cannot hope to realise those aspirations towards nationhood which are at present cherished by her educated population.

Importance of Education.

The most obvious features of India's educational position at the present moment are two. In the first place, much remains to be done before the instructional machine can be placed upon a broad and substantial basis. In the second place, the control of this important nation-building work has now been transferred to Ministers responsible to the Legislative Councils. In the pages that follow, we shall briefly indicate in some detail the implications of these two facts. To take first the defects in the present educational structure. A study of the diagram appended to this page will show that out of the 247 million inhabitants of British India, less than 9 millions are at present being educated. In other words, considerably less than 4 per cent of this vast population is under the influence of instruction. In the primary school, which must constitute the very foundation of any sound educational structure, scarcely 3 per cent of the population is enrolled. As might be expected from these figures, the prevalence of illiteracy is general. According to the census of 1921, the number of literates in India was 22·6 millions, composed of 19·8 million males and 2·8 million females. In other words, only 122 per mille of Indian men, and 18 per mille of Indian women can read and write. These figures reveal a slight improvement since the census of 1911, when the respective proportions were 106 per mille for men, and 10 for women. On the other hand, the position in regard to secondary education is somewhat remarkable. No less than 0·5 per cent. of the total population is under instruction in secondary schools. In view of the fact that the

The Present Position.

Primary Education and Illiteracy of Masses.

DIAGRAM 25.

Totals of Literates and Illiterates : British India.

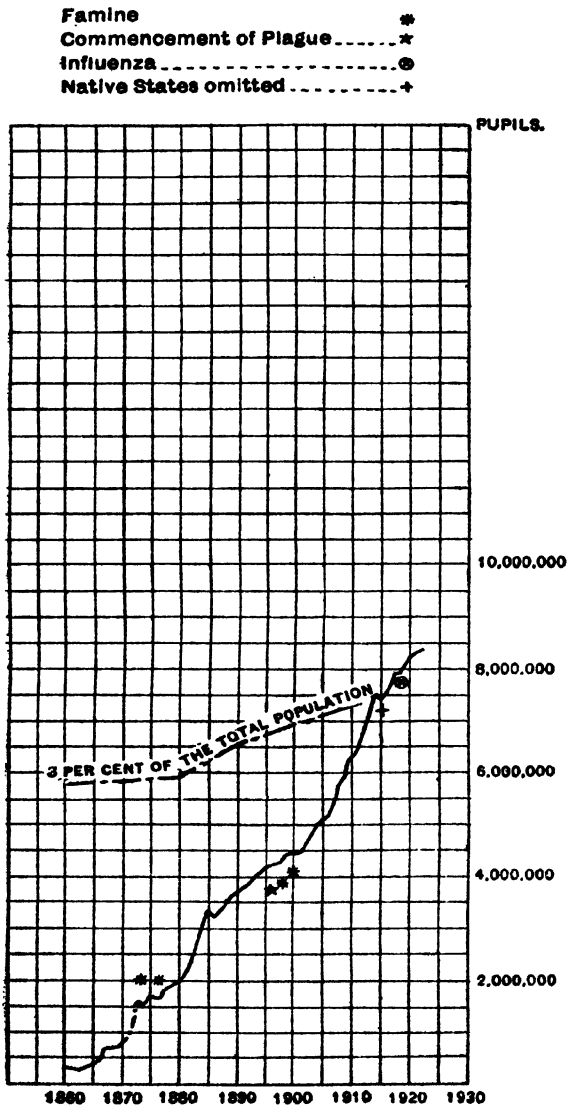


LITERATES
18·6 Million
[each square represents 1,000,000]

ILLITERATES
[each square represents 1,000,000]

DIAGRAM 26.

Total number of pupils under instruction in India.



female population can almost be excluded from the calculation, this is a proportion far greater than the corresponding figure for England and Wales. Still more striking are the figures of university education, where the percentage of the population undergoing instruction is no less than 0·027 per cent. Since again females are almost negligible in the reckoning, this figure compares strikingly with the 0·089 per cent of England and Wales.

Secondary Education.

University Education.

It thus appears that the structure of Indian education is ill-balanced, for while the poorer classes are predominantly illiterate, the middle classes are educated in a proportion equal to that of countries whose social and economic conditions are more highly developed. This remarkable characteristic has impressed itself upon the kind of education generally fashionable. The middle class parent has emphatically demanded for his children a literary type of instruction; because he looks forward to their enlistment either in Government employment, or in the legal profession. Vocational training, which has recently been advocated by many Indian educationalists, has not so far attained great success. There is difficulty in filling the classes; and until opportunities for the employment of such training in later life become more frequent, it is doubtful whether the predominantly literary type of instruction will be seriously challenged in secondary schools Primary education in addition to being unsatisfactory in quantity, is also defective in quality. Investigations show that the majority of children in primary schools are under instruction for between 3 and 4 years only; and for the greater portion of the time, four out of every five linger in the lowest class. In consequence, there is a tendency to lapse into illiteracy after the short period of instruction comes to a close.

An Ill-Balanced Structure.

It is plain therefore that if national education is to be placed upon a solid foundation, the first and most vital task is an attack upon illiteracy. This problem, however, is complicated by factors peculiar to India, some of which have been briefly remarked upon in foregoing pages. Among these may be included the poverty of the masses, the inadequate condition of communications, the persistence of certain traditional ideals at present regulating human intercourse throughout the country, the conflict of communal interests, and the chasm between urban and rural life. These factors have broadly speaking operated to prevent the growth of a desire for education among the masses of the community. Another serious difficulty is constituted

The Problem of Illiteracy.

by the financial position of the country. As will be seen from the diagram on the opposite page, the total expenditure on education in India is still under Rs. 20 crores. This sum, while representing a fraction of the public resources of the country which compares not unfavourably with the proportions devoted by other lands to the same purpose, is quite inadequate to the calls made upon it. Moreover, owing to certain peculiarities of Indian life, there are difficulties of laying it out to the best advantage. For example, no Western country has found it possible to carry through a mass-programme of popular education without the employment of a predominant proportion of women teachers. In India, for reasons noticed elsewhere, the assistance of women is not usually available. Equally serious are the difficulties to which the village school is exposed. The social conditions of the country discourage men of trained intellect from returning to the mofussil and from influencing the masses in the direction of education. Further, the religious organizations of India do not offer to educated men the same opportunities of social work and influence as fall to clergymen in the West; nor is there the same scope for the Indian medical graduate in the village as exists for a practitioner in the English countryside. Finally the Indian landowner does not ordinarily proceed to a university, and if he does, he rarely spends the remainder of his life upon his ancestral estates. There is thus a tendency for the village teacher to remain isolated, deprived of the stimulus of contact with minds more fully developed than his own. And throughout the whole educational structure there is a marked absence of the honorary services and personal interest of the wealthier and better educated classes, who throughout the West have done so much to increase the influence and add to the efficiency of the village primary school.

Financial Difficulty.

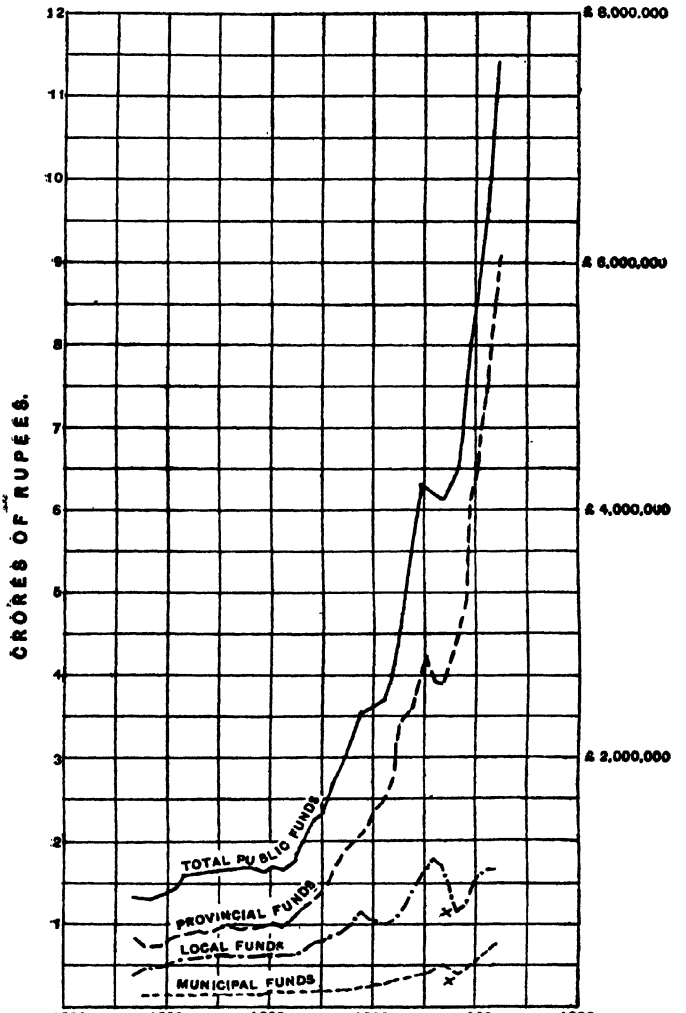
Social Conditions.

Owing to the strengthened contact between the Education Department and public opinion, the transfer of the educational structure to the charge of popular Ministers has resulted in the encouragement of many developments which were slowly shaping themselves under the older system. Broadly speaking, the Provincial Legislative Councils are now empowered to determine the best method of adapting the existing machinery to local requirements. The proceedings of the local Legislatures clearly reveal the keen interest aroused by educational problems among the Indian intelligenzia. Almost every Province is now displaying great educational activity; and in most places attention is being directed to a concerted attack upon illiteracy in its very strong hold, namely, the

Consequences of the Transfer of Education.

DIAGRAM 27.

Public expenditure on Education.



× Fall due to reclassification of expenditure according to which Government contributions made to local bodies for education are included in expenditure from provincial funds.

masses of the population. Even before the transfer, Primary Education Acts had been passed in many Provinces, permitting local bodies to introduce, under certain conditions, the principle of compulsory education. Bombay led the way with a private bill which was passed into law in 1918. Other bills followed for Bihar and Orissa, for Bengal and for the United Provinces in 1919. Government measures were passed for the Punjab in 1919, and for the Central Provinces and Madras in 1920. A similar measure is at present under consideration in Assam. But while these Provincial Legislative Councils have shown themselves clearly favourable to the compulsory principle, the actual introduction of the necessary steps, and their adoption by local bodies, have been attended by considerable difficulty. As we have already noticed in our discussion of the institutions of local self-government, there is a general reluctance on the part of municipalities and boards to apply coercive measures even to such a vital matter as the collection of their own rates. It is therefore not surprising to discover that they have displayed an even greater timidity in employing compulsion in the sphere of education. In the Central Provinces, for example, only two schemes for the application of the 1920 Act had been put forward by 1922-23. In Madras, at the close of the same period, no more than 7 municipalities had actually introduced compulsory elementary education. Under these circumstances, as will be realised, the progress achieved has not been so substantial as was at one time anticipated. In part, the difficulty has arisen from the general political atmosphere of the country, which has rendered the last two years an unfavourable period for the general adoption of the compulsory principle. But local Governments are now in general occupied in investigating the best means of translating compulsory primary education from theory into practice. In Bombay, for example, the comparatively unsatisfactory results of the earlier Compulsory Education Act have led to a recognition that the initiative in the matter of compulsion can most easily come from Government. This principle has been embodied in a fresh measure. It is provided that a local authority may declare its intention to provide compulsory elementary education in the whole or part of the area subject to its jurisdiction; and a local authority which makes no attempt to introduce compulsion may be called upon to do so by Government. The Administration is invested with powers enabling it adequately to enforce the

Strong Attacks on Illiteracy.

The Principle of Compulsion.

Difficulties of its Application.

Renewed Efforts.

compulsory principle. In the United Provinces, also, Government addressed the municipalities with the object of inducing them seriously to apply the compulsory principle, agreeing to be responsible for two-thirds of the extra cost involved under certain conditions. The results of this enquiry were promising; 32 municipal boards having expressed their willingness to take the necessary measures. By the close of the year 1922-23, 8 municipalities were beginning to work the scheme. In the Punjab also, the careful application of the principle of compulsion to suitable areas, has been attended by most satisfactory results in increasing the number of pupils in primary schools. In general, it would seem, the utility of the compulsory principle to India, at least in the immediate future, consists rather in the power which it vests in the authorities of keeping pupils under instruction until they have made real progress, than in swelling the numbers reading in the primary schools. The sphere which exists in the country for voluntary effort, so far from being exhausted, has scarcely been trenched upon; and it is only when intensive propaganda concerning the advantages of education shall have discharged its function, that compulsion need seriously be taken into account as a measure for filling the generality of institutions, as opposed to those exceptional cases wherein compulsion is dictated as a measure of economy for the concentration of pupils.

Bombay, United Provinces and Punjab.

Function of the Compulsory Principle.

The stimulus to popular enthusiasm in matters educational, which has accompanied their transfer to popular control, is by no means confined to the primary stages. There has been of late an increasing realisation among the Provincial authorities that secondary and university education in India, although quantitatively more satisfactory than primary education, have qualitatively certain serious defects. Secondary education in particular is still of poor standard and badly regulated. In consequence, the major portion of those boys who pass through the full secondary course enter the world with no real training for citizenship. The merits and demerits of good and bad high schools, it has been said, vary in degree but not in kind. The organization, the methods of instruction, the aims which inspire the work of the staff, the daily routine, the principles of study, and the ambitions of the scholars, seem to differ very little throughout the country. The demands for secondary education in India, although during the last two years they have been less

Progress of Secondary Education.

marked, through economic stress, than in other periods during the last decade, continue almost inexhaustible ; and efforts at improvement seem to be swallowed up in an overwhelming supply of cheap and bad institutions. The proprietors of private schools are able to manage their academies at the lowest possible limits of efficiency ; and since the most necessary ingredients of education as generally understood namely, social life and good physical conditions, are not demanded, they are not forthcoming. Fortunately, it is now generally admitted that secondary education in India needs to be radically remodelled in order to bring it more closely into contact with the needs and aspirations of the country. There is a growing realisation that since, under the most favourable circumstances, the largest proportion of the population of India cannot hope to pursue its formal education beyond the secondary stage, the structure of secondary education should be well-balanced and complete in itself. Up to the present time, Indian boys who desired to obtain an education worthy of the name, were compelled to pass from the secondary school to the university, even though their aptitudes and their choice of future vocation rendered them unsuited to a university career. It was for this state of affairs that the Calcutta University Commission, whose report represents a landmark in Indian education, desired to find a remedy. The proposals of the Report regarding the separation of secondary from university education, the erection of the former into a self-contained system, and the confining of each to its proper sphere, are now being carried out in several Indian Provinces. Boards for secondary and intermediate education—stages which together constitute a complete pre-university course—have been set up in various parts of India ; and progress is being made, as rapidly as the financial situation allows, with the constitution of intermediate colleges at suitable centres. In addition, several Provincial Governments are overhauling their high-school system ; are revising their methods of inspection ; are raising the pay of their schoolmasters ; and are encouraging manual training, physical development, and the Boy Scout movement.

Present Difficulties.

Future Measures.

The general control of the University system, with the exception of certain All-India sectarian institutions and the Delhi University, has been placed within the province of the Local Governments. The Government of India, however, still retain certain functions in connection with university matters, particularly in the sphere of legislation. Of late, university education in

Indian Universities.

India has undergone a striking change as a result of the lead supplied by the recommendations of the Calcutta University Commission. Up to some three years ago, the typical Indian University consisted of scattered colleges, one often separated from the other by hundreds of miles. With inadequate staff and inconsiderable equipment, these colleges in the majority of cases attempted to convey instruction far more elaborate than lay within their competence; while the university itself pursued a phantom existence as an examining body. In substitution for this system, the Calcutta University Commission recommended the erection of centralised unitary universities—residential and teaching bodies, in which all instruction was to be given by university officers under the direct control of the university authorities. This change was to be accompanied by the removal from the university stage of all tuition which did not strictly belong to it; and the creation of new institutions to be called intermediate colleges, which should provide a logical culmination to the secondary school course. But as India was studded with isolated colleges before the new idea took shape, the reorganization of universities of the old affiliating type may be expected to proceed hand in hand with the multiplication of the new unitary universities. The task of giving effect to such recommendations of the Calcutta University Commission as seemed to harmonise with local conditions, has fallen to the reformed Provincial Governments. The lead was taken by the United Provinces, where new universities have lately been opened at Aligarh and at Lucknow; while the original university at Allahabad has been reconstructed in an attempt to follow the general lines recommended by the Commission. Allahabad University now contains both an internal and an external side; the internal side following the lines of a unitary and residential university; the external side carrying on the old work of affiliation for the benefit of outlying colleges. The operation of this dual system has been attended by certain disadvantages; and a movement is now on foot to start an affiliating university at Agra to which the outside colleges could be attached. In Rajputana also, the need for a separate university is now being felt. A university has recently been established at Delhi, and another at Nagpur; while during the period under review the centralised residential university incorporated at Rangoon has been modified in such a manner as to allow for the affiliation of outsides colleges. Elsewhere, existing universities are being remodelled. In Bengal, the university at Calcutta is about to undergo certain modifications. The universities of

Recent Changes.

Lines of Development.

the Punjab and of Bombay have developed new honours courses, and added university teachers. The Madras University has also been remodelled by a recent Act, which provides for intercollegiate teaching in Madras itself; and differentiates outside institutions affiliated to the University into those which are and those which are not to be developed as potential university centres. During the period under review, the financial difficulties of the Calcutta University and its requests for additional grants gave rise to some discussion in the local Council as to the relations between the University and the Provincial Government. A draft measure of legislation proposing that the local authorities should exercise closer financial control over university affairs, provoked such criticism on the part of the University that a Conference was convened representative of the parties affected. Negotiations were still proceeding at the close of 1923.

Transfer of Education : Unfavourable Time.

It will be plain from what has already been said that the transfer of education to popular control has been accompanied by developments in many directions. It must owever be realised that this transfer was accomplished under somewhat unfavourable circumstances. It coincided in the first place with the advent of widespread financial stringency, and in the second place, with the period of excitement connected with the non-co-operation movement. Of the two, the former difficulty has proved the most serious. Not only were provincial resources at a low ebb owing to the prevailing conditions in agriculture and commerce ; but in addition the finances of the Central Government made it imperative to call upon the Provinces for heavy subventions. In consequence, education, like other nation-building departments, has suffered through financial disabilities. This will be apparent from the fact that the Provincial expenditure from Government funds per capita on education works out at a yearly average of Rs. 0·37. The inequalities of Provincial revenue, and the disproportion at present existing in many local administrations between revenue and population, combine to make even this modest figure beyond the capacity of certain Provinces. Accordingly, during the period under review, many useful schemes, including the provision of school buildings, had to be held is abeyance for want of funds. Programmes of expansion of primary education in various Provinces could not be entirely carried out. The number of inspectors and other educational officers has been curtailed wherever it was possible to do so. At the same time, it is gratifying to notice, any real reduction of Government expenditure on education

Financial Stringency.

met with great hostility on the part of the public. In very few Provinces, indeed, did this expenditure fail to rise. The tragedy lay in the fact that despite the utmost efforts of the administration, the sums available were inadequate to the demands made upon them. But the general financial stringency has produced results which are not entirely sinister. In the first place, it has led to a minute investigation into existing resources with a view to their more effective utilization. The Punjab in particular, can show very striking results in this direction. Between 1921-22 and 1922-23, the percentage increase in expenditure on primary schools was only one-quarter that of the percentage increase in the number of scholars. In the secondary schools, moreover, while the number of pupils increased by 19 per cent, the budget for secondary education s owed an increase of only 8 per cent. And while the total expenditure on education rose from Rs. 190 lakhs to Rs. 220 lakhs, the number of scholars rose from 627,000 to 777,000. The principal devices which rendered this economy possible have been found to lie in the concentration of specialist teachers in convenient centres ; in the abolition of water-tight compartments so that high-schools can serve more than one district, and training institutions more than one division ; and in the cautious application of the compulsory system. This last indeed has been found to yield unsuspected economy. It ensures that pupils will stay at school at least for four years, and carry away with them tuition which will prove of real benefit in later life. It enables the size of classes to be increased. It enables all existing buildings to be fully occupied ; and it facilitates the concentration of the school-going population into efficient institutions staffed by more than one teacher.

Economies.

The second of the disadvantages which have attended the transfer of the educational system of India to popular control, is the troubled political situation of the country. The non-co-operating campaign included in its programme a concerted attack upon the whole educational structure. The withdrawal of pupils from Government and State aided institutions ; the withdrawal of institutions from all forms of Government contro', and the erection of a parallel structure of " national education," were among the items of its programme. The actual results of this attack varied from province to province ; but in general it was responsible for a decline in the numbers of pupils under instruction in Government schools, and for a serious depression of educational finance. Somewhat naturally it gravely affected student discipline, leading to an increase in strikes, and to serious offences

Political Agitation.

against school and college regulations. In Bengal and Burma, the two Provinces most widely affected, some 24,000 students had withdrawn from recognised institutions up to the end of March 1921; and even where the movement had attained less striking proportions, its disturbing effects upon the educational system were serious. Unfortunately, the debit items were not offset by any satisfactory entries on the credit side.

The Experiment of "National. Education."

It is no exaggeration to say that provided the work and discipline in existing institutions had remained unaffected, the educational authorities throughout the country would have welcomed the inauguration of the experiment of national education. But before long, it was clear that the "national" system had failed to materialise. Such distinctive features as the new schools showed were unworthy of imitation. Great stress had been laid by Mr. Gandhi upon the use of the spinning-wheel and encouragement of the vernacular. But spinning, whatever its economic value, has little worth in education as compared with that possessed by other forms of hand and eye training. Even an elementary knowledge of child nature is sufficient to explain why the spinning-wheel has fallen into disuse in so many institutions. Further, there is little evidence that the vernacular is any more extensively used in the "national" schools than it is under the present regulations in recognised institutions; and there is information to show that many of the "national" schools gained a brief popularity by commencing the study of English at a stage earlier than is permitted by Departmental regulations. Apart from this, the curriculum of the "national" institutions differed very little from that prescribed by the Education Department. It has been stated that the teachers "were all products of the recognised system, and were only qualified to teach what they had learned. Too often they were not qualified even to do this, and the discipline of the new schools was notoriously lax." At the time of writing, it is reported from the Provinces that most of the national schools have disappeared. The best of them have now sought and regained official recognition; the few that remain outside the educational structure teach usually the ordinary curriculum, but are badly housed and equipped and often staffed by very inefficient teachers. At the same time, the idealism which characterised the better side of the movement has not proved wholly infructuous; since the conception of large educational institutions carried on without help from Government, is a distinct contribution to the future, even if the realization is yet to come. Further, it has brought to light evidence of a genuine dissatisfaction with the

Its Failure and its Lesson.

present character of the education supplied to the people of the country; and has thus led those in charge of this important subject to devote increasing attention to the necessity of bringing the curriculum into harmony with the changing requirements of India.

Recovery of the Educational System.

At the time of writing, it is amply apparent that the educational organization of the country has emerged triumphantly from the ordeal to which it was subjected. The latest reports available from every Province indicate that the ground at one time lost has now been fully regained. In the North-West Frontier Province, for example, the numbers of pupils in all kinds of institutions rose in 1922-23 from 53,914 to 56,403. In the Punjab, as we have already noticed, the increase during the same period was from 627,000 to 777,000. In the United Provinces, the numbers increased from 1,029,565 to 1,080,951. In Bihar there was a rise of 33,644 in the number of pupils under instruction in all classes of institutions; the numbers now standing at 844,026 as against 810,382. In Bengal, the number of pupils rose from 1,892,153 to 1,950,929. In Bombay, the number of those under instruction increased from 958,392 to 973,760. In Madras, during the same period, the number of pupils in all institutions rose by 78,905 to 1,915,117. In the Central Provinces, the progress was from 333,303 to 340,050. In Assam the increase was from 216,218 to 229,776. In light of the educational requirements of India, this progress must be accounted small; but in fairness we may remember that it represents but the first-fruits of a process of reorganization, the full effects of which have been delayed both by financial stringency and by political unrest.

Certain Tendencies.

While it is still too early to determine with any exactitude the effect produced upon the educational system by the changes of the last three years, it is already possible to discern the emergence of certain tendencies. In the first place, there is a marked readiness to experiment with new methods, and a zest in the preparation of definite programmes for expansion. Upon these developments space does not permit us to enlarge, for the simple reason that almost every province is taking up particular schemes. Next, there are encouraging symptoms of a new desire on the part of local bodies to devote a high percentage of their income to educational expansion. That there is ample room for further progress in this direction will be apparent from the comparatively small share of municipal and local funds in the total educational expenditure of the country. This is well brought out in the diagram oppo-

Enthusiasm.

site page 228. A further feature which deserves notice is the divergency in the forms of machinery now favoured in various parts of India. On one side we may notice a desire to secure, through every branch of educational activity, the direct and personal control of the Minister responsible to the Provincial Council. This line of advance seems generally favoured by the majority of Provinces. On the other side, there are distinct signs of a tendency precisely antithetical—a desire to decentralise educational control, and to erect within particular areas a School-Board or Educational Council which shall stand, as it were, between the Central Administration and the schools themselves. This divergency in different localities, while of itself probably arising from the requirements of widely different conditions, is symptomatic of a growth of provincialism which requires to be carefully watched. It is, of course, inevitable that each Province should develop its own educational policy; but there are certain matters in which local or provincial variation is dangerous to the cause of education. For example, with the multiplication of universities in the Provinces, there is a real danger lest the pressure of competition may result in the lowering of standards. Further, while it is natural that a Province should prefer to recruit its officers from among its own population, the extension of this principle to academic appointments is likely eventually to result in a certain deterioration. In which connection it is much to be regretted that on account of financial stringency, the Central Advisory Board of Education, which was the only body competent to collate, for the benefit of the Provinces, the educational experience derived from the whole of India, has been abolished. It is much to be hoped, in the interests of Indian education, that this Board will be revived as soon as conditions permit. To the external observer, it is somewhat ironical that the only educational machinery which has suffered serious retrenchment during the last two years is that connected with the Government of India. Superficially speaking, there might seem to be good grounds for such a step; since education has now passed to the control of the Provincial Governments. But there is a broader aspect to be considered. Unless there exists with the Government of India some machinery which is entrusted with the duty of mitigating provincial particularism by encouraging conferences between provincial authorities; by pooling experience; and by keeping steadily before its eye the national as opposed to the provincial aspects of education, it seems probable that serious consequences may ensue. The only method by which the idea of nationhood

Provincialism.

Dangers of Retrenchment.

can be spread fruitfully throughout the vast population of India, which includes a multitude of diverse races, castes and creeds, is through the creation of an educational system which, however flexible in detail, and however adaptable to local needs, contains common elements of the nation-building kind. Extreme provincialism in public institutions may well result in accentuating rather than in softening racial, linguistic and provincial lines of cleavage, to the postponement rather than the acceleration of a united Indian nationality.

We may conclude this review of Indian education by a brief investigation into certain particular problems, which at the moment present themselves for solution. Hitherto we have been dealing primarily with the Indian population of a school-going age. But it will be obvious on reflection that a very large part of the education now needed in India is adult education; and particularly adult education of a kind which will supply the new electorates with some guidance in the use of the suffrage which constitutional reforms have placed in their hands. Broadly speaking adult education in India resolves itself into two distinct problems, since two distinct classes of people have to be considered. There is first of all the very numerous section of the population which has received no substantial instruction in early life. There is secondly a more favoured class which has enjoyed a fair general education, but has lacked the opportunity for developing its civic consciousness after leaving school. This latter class presents a great scope for the university extension movement. Good progress has already been made in various Indian cities; and lectures for the benefit of the general public have been arranged on a wide variety of subjects. From certain other localities it is reported that the response of the public has proved unsatisfactory; but with increasing experience of the requirements of the class for which these lectures are designed to cater, it is hoped that the difficulties will be overcome. But the main problem attending adult education is that of reaching the country districts, where the preponderating bulk of the people live. So far as the education of the rural community is concerned, an excellent beginning is being made by the Departments of Agriculture, Public Health and Cooperative Credit, which in various parts of India organize lectures on matters directly affecting the welfare of the people. In 1923, no less than 18,000 adults were enrolled in classes held in Punjab schools after school hours. The cost of this achievement was very small; but the results are full of promise. Even more striking

Adult Education.

University Extension.

Night Schools.

progress was made in Madras, where the number of night schools rose during the period under review from 707 to 2,456 and their enrolment from 17,606 to 58,233. It is to be hoped that with the installation of village libraries, a development along this line may suffice gradually to raise the rural classes to a higher standard of culture. Among the industrial classes in the towns, progress has been much greater. Apart from the work done by the University Extension movement, several philanthropic associations such as the Young Men's Christian Association and various Social Service Leagues are labouring nobly for the instruction of the workers. The popularity of night classes and of general lectures in such a centre as Bombay, serves to indicate the demand now arising for education among classes of workers who have hitherto been contented to remain wholly illiterate.

Female Education.

The problem of adult education is vast; but its solution appears almost straightforward in comparison with the complexities presented by another question, upon which depends the future of the whole country—the education of Indian women. We have already pointed out on various pages of this Statement the immense drag which general illiteracy and normal unproductiveness on the part of 50 per cent of India's population must necessarily impose upon the progress of the country. It is sometimes said that the principal obstacle to female education in India is the parda system. But this is true only to a limited extent. A far more formidable difficulty is the complete absence of effective demand.

Absence of Demand.

The importance of educating the female half of the community is not yet recognised by the bulk of opinion, which is, of course, predominently male. Indeed until recently, the demand for such education was practically confined to a few advanced thinkers. The difficulty of devising courses of instruction which will commend themselves to that substantial body of public opinion which still regards female education with suspicion, is very great; but until it can be achieved, there will be little prospect of changing the prevailing sentiment. But quite apart from the present lack of effective demand, there are many grave difficulties connected with its creation and satisfaction. No rapid expansion is possible without an adequate supply of competent women teachers. And the fact must be faced that only a great social change can call them forth. As the Calcutta University Commission report pointed out "until men learn the rudiments of respect and chivalry towards women, who are not living in zenanas, anything like a service of women

Social Changes Involved.

teachers will be impossible." The problem therefore depends for its solution not merely upon the energy and devotion of those in charge of educational administration, but also upon a change in the whole public attitude of India towards womenkind. At the present moment, while the number of Indian girls under instruction is steadily increasing in every Province, the rate of progress is painfully slow. But as has already been pointed out in the section of this Statement dealing with Social Reform, the progressive elements of Indian public opinion are now ranging themselves upon the side of female education. A hopeful sign is the gradual entry of Indian ladies into the teaching or nursing professions. Certain voluntary organizations, such as the Young Women's Christian Association and the Poona Seva Sabha show healthy progress.

Muhammadan Education.

Among other branches of educational work we may notice that the instruction of Muhammadans presents problems of its own. Every Muhammadan boy must spend a considerable time in imbibing religious instruction; and this fact naturally diminishes the time available for secular instruction. One consequence has been a general backwardness in education as compared with the Hindus. Fortunately, this deficiency has not escaped the notice of the leaders of Muslim thought; and in many Provinces special efforts are being made to encourage Muhammadan education. While there is considerable lee-way to make up in most parts of India, Muhammadan education has on the whole been gaining ground in a manner not unsatisfactory during the period under review. The foundation of the new Muslim University in Aligarh may be expected to contribute powerfully to the educational uplift of the Muhammadan community.

Technical Education.

There are now increasing symptoms in India of a demand for technical and industrial education; but for the most part the success of training of this description is intimately bound up with the existence of avenues leading to lucrative employment. At present, owing to the industrial condition of the country, these avenues are for the most part lacking. For some years the principal difficulty of advanced technical education has lain in the lack of suitable openings for training students. While Government Engineering Colleges continue to expand their enrolment, and the Schools of Engineering scattered up and down the country are prospering, there are no signs that their multiplication would be for the present profitable. So long as the industrial condition of the country undergoes no remarkable development, there will be no scope for such an increase in technical institutions as is advocated by certain sections of opinion. So far as

agricultural education is concerned, there are symptoms that the five well-equipped agricultural colleges in India are becoming increasingly popular. School education in agriculture is also making good progress.

Agricultural Education.

The Punjab has recently struck out a line of its own, which seems to possess great possibilities. Ordinary vernacular middle schools are now being utilised for imparting practical training in agriculture to schoolboys in rural areas. There are two special features of the scheme which have so far contributed much to its success. In the first place, there is attached to each school a farm whose area and equipment is sufficient for practical training on a reasonably large scale. This farm can be made practically self-supporting. In the next place, the training is given, not by one of the ordinary school teachers, but by a teacher specially selected for the work, and trained for a year in the Agricultural College at Lyallpur. The new scheme has achieved an immediate popularity, and has already spread to a quarter of the total number of vernacular middle schools in the Province. The fact that technical instruction in agriculture is combined with a good general type of education is probably in large degree responsible for its popularity; for it is an interesting fact that the poorer classes of the population do not seem to favour a rigid vocational education; but prefer that their sons should receive training less restricted in its scope.

CHAPTER V.

Politics and Progress.

The trend of domestic politics of India during the period we are now reviewing exemplifies in increasing degree the tendencies noticed in the course of last year's Statement. The change in the character of the non-co-operation movement, foreshadowed by the events of 1922-23, has become an accomplished fact. So striking is it, indeed, that there are those who maintain that non-co-operation has entirely perished during 1923. This view, however, is superficial, for the movement has always possessed two aspects. On the one hand it put forward a series of aims ; on the other, it advocated certain methods by which those aims were to be achieved. From the first, the aims attracted more adherents than the campaign designed for their accomplishment ; with the result that the failure of the campaign, though productive both of confusion and of discouragement, has left unimpaired the glamour of the objectives it did not attain. Accordingly, while non-co-operation as a political campaign has suffered discredit through its manifest impossibilities, non-co-operation as an attitude of mind, and as the vehicle of an awakened national sentiment, still survives. We shall fail to understand the political life of India to-day unless we realise that from the beginning, Mr. Gandhi's campaign has been not so much a cause of India's unrest as a symptom of those deep discontents from which the unrest resulted.

Origin of Non-co-operation.

We may remind ourselves that in the beginning, the non-co-operation movement originated from a variety of causes. Some were political, others religious, yet others economic. We have already noticed in an earlier chapter the remarkable stimulus afforded by the War to the spirit of Indian nationalism. Even before the outbreak of hostilities, there were symptoms of discontent with the constitutional position introduced by the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909. India's expectations as to the recognition which her War services would win for her from British statesmen rose high ; and in consequence the scheme foreshadowed by the Montagu-Chelmsford Report of 1918 was condemned by many sections of opinion as inadequate. The reaction against

Western influence and Western culture, which had been characteristic of India, as of many other Asiatic countries, for the last two decades, received a great stimulus from the racial bitterness engendered by the Punjab disturbances of 1919. All these causes of dissatisfaction were enhanced by the economic stringency of post-war adjustment. To them must further be added the bitter resentment of the Muhammadans at the delay in announcing the terms of peace with Turkey, and their apprehensions lest the last remaining bulwark of Islam in Europe might be shattered by the Christian Powers. It is quite possible that some of these causes of discontent might have failed, with the possible exception of the Punjab and Mussalman grievances, to result in any dangerous agitation. But the remarkable personality of Mr. Gandhi, gathered together the threads of unrest and wove them into a movement having for its object the destruction of the existing system of Government. His insistence upon the supremacy of soul-force, his advocacy of national fasting as a means to influence Government, his conviction of the irresistible power of passive resistance, were calculated to appeal directly to the growing Hindu reaction against the dominance of Western civilization. His adoption of the cause of Islam, and his acceptance of every claim put forward by the Khilafat Party as being dictated by the unalterable mandate of religion, cemented for the time his influence over the Musulman community. Finally, his declared aim of satisfying Muslim religious aspirations, redressing national grievances in the matter of the Punjab, and the obtaining Swaraj by a process of peaceful revolution, enabled him to stand forth as the unchallenged head of the whole national movement.

Mr. Gandhi's Position.

The steps he laid down for the achievement of these objects were also intended to provide a means of self-discipline for his followers. He prescribed in the first instance four stages of non-co-operation ; the resignation of titles and honorary offices ; the resignation of posts in all Government services, save in the police and in the army ; the resignation of service from police and the army ; and, finally, refusal to pay taxes. In the summer and autumn of 1920, Mr. Gandhi was lifted by degrees upon a wave of sentiment both Hindu and Muslim to a height which no Indian leader had previously attained. In September 1920 he obtained the support of a special Calcutta meeting of the Indian National Congress, assuring the assembled delegates that Swaraj could be gained in the course of a single year. Exactly what Swaraj implied, no one exactly knew. To Mr. Gandhi himself, it probably stood for his own ideal of

the subjection of the lower nature of man to the higher. But others read into it a political desideratum ranging from complete independence to Dominion home-rule. Above all, to the masses, suffering under a series of bad harvests, further aggravated by rising prices and low wages, Swaraj became synonymous with the commencement of a Golden Age, when prices should fall, when the peasant should own the land, and when taxation should cease. Consequently, the strength of Mr. Gandhi's movement, as soon became apparent, lay in the fact that it provided a large field for the co-operation of people of different capacities and different mentalities. His own remarkable personality achieved a kind of sympathetic coalition not only of those who desired immediate change of one kind or another in the existing order of things, but also of those who were susceptible to appeals of a high moral content. Hence, when he proceeded to formulate his famous triple boycott of British Courts, of Government Schools, and of the Reformed Councils, he carried with him a large body of Indian public opinion. In so doing, as has now become apparent, he sowed the seeds of disruption within his movement. The spectacular gesture of the non-co-operators in boycotting the first elections and eschewing the Councils recoiled on their own heads ; and the political history of India during the year 1923-24 has been largely determined by the desire of a growing section of the non-co-operating party to reverse a decision of which the full implications were not then realised.

Agitation and Disorder.

But throughout the year 1921, Mr. Gandhi's campaign proceeded to advance with remarkable impetus. His capture of the Congress organization in December 1920 was of immense service to the progress of his movement. An intensified agitation spread over the whole country which was largely accentuated by the activities of the national volunteers raised in response to Mr. Gandhi's request. Originally recruited from among educated youths, these volunteers began to draw adherents from the rabble of the population. Before the year 1921 had come to an end, most of the members of this body were in receipt of payment, whether regular or occasional ; constituting in practice a disorderly, if unarmed militia, for the enforcement of the decrees of the Congress Working Committee, which had been established to direct from day to day the details of the campaign against Government. Social boycott and intimidation were freely practised ; the tale of anarchy and disorder increased month by month ; and in August 1921 there burst forth in Malabar the terrible Moplah Outbreak.

In face of this remarkable campaign the position of the authorities was one of great difficulty. While Government did not regard non-co-operation as constitutional, they determined to institute no proceedings against those of its promotors who advocated abstention from violence. They knew that the movement was largely engendered and sustained in the case of the Hindus by national aspirations, and in the case of the Muhammadans by religious feeling: and they did not desire to adopt measures which might intensify racial hatred, and paralyse those sections of liberal opinion which were prepared to work the Reforms. Accordingly, while vigorous action was taken under the ordinary Law against those persons who attempted to incite the public to violence, or to spread disaffection among the forces of the Crown, the authorities trusted that the good sense of the general public combined with the enactment of such remedial measures as would remove legitimate political grievances, would suffice to keep the danger within bounds.

Attitude of the Authorities.

These hopes were not however realised. As the year 1921 proceeded, the menace to law and order attained formidable dimensions. Mr. Gandhi's ill-judged attempt to start a campaign of civil disobedience, which he defined as "a civil revolution which, wherever practised, would mean the end of Government authority, and open defiance of Government and its laws," placed a severe strain upon the safety of the State. The serious riots which broke out in certain parts of India during the visit of the Prince of Wales aroused the apprehensions even of Mr. Gandhi himself. Accordingly, he announced his intention of suspending the civil disobedience campaign until such time as he was convinced that the proper atmosphere of non-violence had been attained. Meanwhile, however, the authorities found themselves obliged to combat the illegal activities of volunteer associations by the employment of Part II of the Criminal Law Amendment Act. In several districts also, the Seditious Meetings Act was used to check the increasing volume of inflammatory speeches. The policy thus initiated was assailed as an interference with the rights of association and of free speech, and there was a disposition on this ground for Moderates to sympathise with Extremists. The result was the abortive movement towards a Round Table Conference in December 1921 and January 1922. But the close of the year 1921 ushered in the decline of the non-co-operation campaign. Swaraj had not been achieved within the promised year; the volunteer movement was

Serious Situation.

The Authorities take Action.

steadily succumbing to the pressure of the authorities; and the faith of the Mussalmans in non-co-operation as a means for achieving a satisfactory settlement of the Turkish Question was badly shaken. At this point, Mr. Gandhi was so ill-advised as to address an ultimatum to Government declaring that a campaign of civil disobedience had been forced upon his followers in order to secure the elementary rights of free speech, free association and liberty of the press—rights which the position he was even then occupying proved him to have utilised continuously and enjoyed without intermission from the very outset of his movement. But on February 4th, 1922, there occurred the terrible massacre perpetrated at Chauri Chaura by volunteers. Mr. Gandhi at once suspended mass civil disobedience, and instructed his followers to abandon every preparation of an intensive nature. For the future, non-co-operation activities were to be confined to a constructive programme, upon the accomplishment of which any further advance would depend. The principal features of this programme were to be the popularization of the spinning-wheel and home-spun cloth, the enlistment of members for the Indian National Congress and the salvation of the depressed classes. The publication of this decree alienated many of those sections of Mr. Gandhi's followers who had previously begun to lose their faith in his political sagacity as opposed to his moral eminence. When the All-India Congress Committee met at Delhi to confirm these "Bardoli Resolutions" his personal ascendency even over his immediate followers was considerably taxed. He was indeed successful in securing the confirmation of his ban against mass civil disobedience; but was obliged to acquiesce in the position that individual civil disobedience might nevertheless be commenced by permission of Provincial Congress Committee. Further, the distinction between "individual" and "mass" civil disobedience was so attenuated as to be of little practical moment. It therefore appeared to the authorities that proceedings against the leader of the movement ought no longer to be postponed: and Mr. Gandhi was accordingly arrested on March 10th, 1922, tried, and convicted of sedition.

Chauri Chaura.

Mr. Gandhi loses Control.

Throughout 1922 the non-co-operation campaign grew steadily weaker. It had not redeemed its promises to the nationalists in the matter of Swaraj; to the Muhammadans in the matter of the Khilafat; or to the masses by the inauguration of The Golden Age. The programme laid down at Bardoli was of such a nature that it could have proved a popular

Loss of Faith in the Campaign.

battle-cry only under Mr. Gandhi's own guidance. He was now removed; and there was none to fill his place. Further, the sustained efforts of the Government of India to secure the modification of the Treaty of Sévres in such a manner as Muslim feeling demanded, had begun to produce their effect. The opinion gradually spread throughout the Mussulman community that it was Government rather than Mr. Gandhi who was helping their cause. Further, there were not wanting even among Hindu politicians signs of a lack of faith in the principles of non-co-operation. Maharashtra, still under influence of Tilak, had never taken kindly to Mr. Gandhi's doctrine in its entirety, and had from the first regarded the boycott of the Councils as a mistake. This feeling was emphasised by the realisation that the machinery set up by the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms was functioning effectively. The success of the Central Legislature in influencing the policy of the Executive in such matters as Indianisation, retrenchment, and the repeal of the Press Act; combined with the obvious intention of the Administration to work harmoniously with popular representatives in the new Councils, convinced the more clear-sighted of the non-co-operators that it was impossible to remain in the wilderness without risk of political extinction. And when we further remember that the party which had entered the Council and was now busily reaping the fruits of power acquired under the new Constitution, was one which had for long disputed with the extremist section of political opinion for control over Congress, it is small matter for surprise to discover that throughout the year 1922, the conviction that the Councils must be captured grew steadily among the former followers of Mr. Gandhi. Indeed, the gradual departure of a powerful section of non-co-operators from his behest in the matter of Council boycott must be accounted among the most important consequences of his incarceration.

Council Boycott a Mistake.

None the less, so great was the power of his name that many of the most revered leaders of Indian nationalism were still unprepared to depart from his final injunctions. When in June 1922 a meeting of the Congress and Khilafat Committees took place in Lucknow, it was agreed by the majority of those present that the constructive programme must be pursued. It soon became obvious, however, that the non-co-operation movement as Mr. Gandhi had known it was on the wane. The disorders which had been so serious throughout the year 1921 were noticeably absent; so much so indeed that several local Governments found it possible to

Hesitations and Doubts.

withdraw the Seditious Meetings Act from operation, and even to remove the ban placed upon volunteer bodies. The campaign for national education had declined, students were once more seeking admission to Government schools; and many of those lawyers who had non-co-operated were resuming their practice in the British Courts. The constructive programme had lost such small enthusiasm as it had once attracted; the spinning-wheel had declined in popularity; and the temperance campaign had come almost to an end. Worse still, the structure of Hindu-Muslim unity, so laboriously built up by Mr. Gandhi, was now showing serious weakness. For sometime, as we have noticed, certain sections of Muhammadans had begun to realise the futility of the non-co-operation programme. They had made great sacrifices for it without deriving any corresponding advantages. They began to feel that Government, by steadily pressing Mussalman sentiment upon the attention of the Home authorities, were doing far more to solve the Turkish question than the whole non-co-operation movement had been able to achieve. The news of the victorious advance of Mustapha Kemal Pasha during August and September 1922 relieved Indian Muhammadans of the greater portion of that anxiety which had formerly led them to lend their aid to Mr. Gandhi's movement. Moreover, there were not wanting other indications of the artificial character of the alliance between the two communities which had been such a striking factor during 1921. Hindu feeling had been deeply stirred over the Malabar rising, which had left a legacy of great bitterness in Southern India. In the Punjab, Hindu and Muslim interests took opposing standpoints upon the future administration of the North-West Frontier Province. Moreover, among those Hindus and Mussalmans who were not non-co-operators, there arose once more the old dispute as to the distribution of the loaves and fishes of office. As a result of all these factors, Hindu-Muslim jealousy began to revive throughout the latter half of the year 1922. The Muharram celebrations were attended by serious riots, both in Bengal, and in the Punjab. Despite the strenuous efforts made by Congress leaders to reconcile the two communities, the gulf between them was visibly enlarging.

The Campaign declines.

Hindu-Muslim Unity suffers.

The confusion which had now overtaken the counsels of the non-co-operation party seemed likely to result in the paralysis of the whole movement. Had non-co-operation itself been of a nature to stand or fall by the achievement of Mr. Gandhi's programme, the year 1922

Difficulties of the Congress Party.

would have conferred upon it its epitaph. But, as we have already noticed, this movement had become a channel into which during the preceding two years Indian nationalist sentiment had flowed from many sources. It was therefore quite impossible for the majority of those who had enlisted under Mr. Gandhi's banner, to take back their hand from the work to which they had set themselves. However lamentable might have been the failure of the non-co-operation campaign, the abandonment of the non-co-operation movement was unthinkable on every ground. To admit that the Liberals had been right in entering the Councils : right in utilising the power which the new Constitution conferred upon the electorate : right in supporting Government in its maintenance of law and order : would have condemned the party of non-co-operation to complete extinction. Accordingly, the conviction we have previously noticed as to the dangers of standing outside the new Constitution, and thereby affording the Liberals a free hand, became more and more marked among congressmen throughout the Autumn of 1922. At the same time, there was a very powerful section of opinion which remained still under the spell of Mr. Gandhi's influence, and was thereby prevented from countenancing any attempt to dispute the possession of the new Councils with the Liberals. When the Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee appointed by the Congress presented its report, the cleavage between these two sections of opinion became apparent. The enquiry showed that the organization of the non-co-operators had broken down ; that there was neither trust in nor enthusiasm for the constructive programme ; and that the institution of civil disobedience was beyond the range of practical politics. But its implications were even more serious. Unless some new line of advance could be found, the whole of that large body of Indian national opinion which was represented by the National Congress would find itself face to face with a dead wall. The enthusiasm of the masses was dying ; the country was quiet, except for those lamentable Hindu-Muslim disputes which threatened the solidarity of all political work. The campaign against Government had virtually come to an end ; so that even such incidents as Mr. Lloyd George's "steel-frame" speech, and the exercise by the Viceroy of his powers of certification in connection with the "Princes' Protection Bill" could not be turned to profit by the non-co-operators.

Dangers of an Impasse.

The dissensions within the Congress camp shortly came to a head. The principal protagonists of Council entry were Pundit Motilal Nehru,

the well-known Allahabad leader, and Mr. C. R. Das, an equally famous representative of Bengal. Both these gentlemen are lawyers of eminence, who had made considerable sacrifices in the cause of non-co-operation, and had undergone terms of imprisonment for breaches of the law. Associated with them were a number of Muhammadan leaders among whom may particularly be mentioned Hakim Ajmal Khan. They also enjoyed the support of the majority of the most influential of the Provincial congressmen. Their opponents constituted the rank and file of the younger section of the Congress members, who were still imbued with a pathetic faith in the infallibility of Mr. Gandhi, and clung to their belief in mass civil disobedience as an avenue to the inauguration of the Golden Age. The elections of Congress delegates for the Gaya Meeting in December 1922 were attended with considerable excitement, which in certain places culminated in disorder between the adherents of the two parties. In the event, there were returned a majority of delegates pledged to support the old programme—a symptom of the influence still exerted by Mr. Gandhi's name. Both Mr. Das and Mr. Nehru were high office bearers in the Congress organisation, the former being indeed President of the Gaya Session. But the advantage which this circumstance might have conferred upon the pro-change party, were more than off-set by the number and by the temper of their opponents. The majority of the Congress endorsed the constructive programme, affirmed the triple boycott, and declined to allow Congressmen to contest the elections.

Changers and No-Changers.

The differences which emerged at Gaya between the minority and the majority party were too grave to be glossed over. The advocates of the policy of Council entry, though in the minority, were utterly convinced that they had discovered the only possible method of extricating the Congress from the impasse into which it had been landed by the failure of the non-co-operation programme. Accordingly, while the majority of the party were attempting to take action upon their resolution calling upon local Congress Committees to collect money and enroll volunteers, the minority constituted themselves into what they called the Congress-Khilafat-Swaraj Party, which was to work within the Congress organisation for the conversion of their opponents to the policy of Council entry. Both parties engaged in active propaganda, much of which was mutually destructive. There seemed some risk lest the whole store of energy still remaining at the disposal of the non-co-operation movement should be exhausted

Gaya and After.

in recrimination. Accordingly, strenuous efforts were made to arrive at a compromise. The pro-change party was obviously swimming with the tide. In face of the utter failure of the no-changers to gather funds and volunteers, the propaganda of the Swarajists began to meet with increasing success. But meanwhile, it became increasingly apparent that unless some agreement could be arrived at between the two sections, the whole Congress organisation would become paralysed. Accordingly, towards the end of February a compromise was arranged, whereby both parties were to be at liberty to work out the items of their programme without interfering with each other; propaganda both for and against Council entry being suspended by mutual agreement until the end of April. But by the end of that time, the Gaya Programme had produced little activity and no enthusiasm. On the other hand, the Swaraj Party was gaining fresh adherents all over the country. Undaunted, the majority section reiterated their conviction that the Gaya Programme represented the only scheme for which congressmen could work. Meanwhile, however, the policy of Council entry received notable support from the course of events within the Central Legislature.

Central Legislature. Delhi Session 1923.

The budget session of 1923, as was remarked in last year's Report, proved to be the most important, and in some ways the most critical, which had taken place under the Reformed Constitution. As a result of the recommendations of the Fiscal Commission, Government accepted the principle that the Fiscal policy of the country, subject to certain safeguards, might be declaredly directed to the fostering of industrial development; and that a Tariff Board should be erected to advise for this end. Non-official opinion further succeeded in obtaining from Government the assurance that the management of the East Indian and Great Indian Peninsula Railway lines would be taken over by the State when their contracts fell in. Shortly afterwards, the Legislature secured the removal of a long-standing grievance by amending the Criminal Procedure Code in such a way as to obliterate the most important distinction in the trials of Indian and European subjects of His Majesty. Finally, the Commander-in-Chief in the course of a debate in the Assembly on the question of Indianising the commissioned ranks of the Indian army, announced that it had been decided to set aside eight specific units for Indianisation in order that the proposed policy might receive a fair trial. But on the other side, the session brought forth incidents which were calculated to shake the credit of the Liberal Party in the country. The announcement that a Royal Commission

had been appointed to investigate the condition of the Public Services, served to stimulate anew the disquiet evoked by Mr. Lloyd George's "steel-frame" speech. It was generally feared that India would be called upon to meet a bill for the improved pay and prospects of her European officers; and not even the possibility that the Commission might recommend further Indianisation, sufficed to dispel this alarm. In the next place, a despatch was published from the Secretary of State, wherein, replying to the opinion favouring further constitutional advance expressed in the Legislative Assembly Resolution of September 1921, he had declared that the short experience of the working of the new reforms did not warrant the assumption that the time was ripe for their expansion. Even more formidable from the point of view of the Liberal Party now entrenched within the walls of the Council, was the dispute which arose between the Legislature and the Executive over the enhancement of the Salt Tax. The majority of the Assembly had resolutely set their face against the imposition of the enhanced Salt Duty; and in 1922 their wishes had prevailed. Meanwhile, the drastic process of retrenchment following upon the recommendation of Lord Inchcape's Committee, had not sufficed entirely to bridge the gap between receipts and disbursements. But it now appeared to the Administration of vital importance that the budget of 1923-24 should be balanced; for since the possibilities of retrenchment had been fully taken into consideration, any further delay in achieving financial equilibrium must necessarily exert a most unfortunate influence upon the credit of the country. For reasons fully set forth in His Excellency the Viceroy's pronouncement, the Salt Duty was enhanced by certification. This step was received with the utmost dismay by the majority of the Liberal party. They believed that its imposition would place a premium upon non-co-operation; and there was a disposition in the heat of the moment to discount all that had been achieved by the Reformed Constitution. Lord Reading's act was widely cited as a proof that the "old autocratic system" still persisted. Indignation meetings were held in various parts of the country, at which members of the Legislature emphatically voiced their disappointment at the attitude of Government and their fear lest after all the Reforms might be a delusion.

Difficulties of the Liberals.

Certification of the Salt Tax.

However intelligible might have been the feelings of the elected members of the Assembly, when they perceived that their solid opposition to the Salt Tax

The Liberals Shaken.

was out-weighed by administrative considerations, it cannot be denied that their loss of faith in the Reforms was attended by the most serious political consequences. Their newly aroused doubts as to the efficacy of working through the Councils were eagerly seized upon by the Congress Party. At first it seemed as though the effect of the certification would be to encourage the no-changers at the expense of the Swarajists ; for the former had always preached that the new constitution was a sham. But the latter were fully equal to the emergency. Mr. Das announced in the clearest terms that neither he nor his party believed that Swaraj would come through the Councils. He argued that this machinery constituted a powerful instrument of repression in the hands of the authorities, and that it must be captured at all costs. Recent events lent force to this contention in the minds of many to whom the argument was addressed ; for the discouragement of the Liberals was construed as a sign that Government were utilising the new Parliamentary machinery when it suited them to do so, and were overriding it when occasion seemed to demand. The Swarajists employed this line of argument to support their own policy, urging that the capture of the Councils by themselves would create a situation in which Government could no longer pretend to rule through Parliamentary methods ; but would be faced with the alternative either of reverting to pure autocracy, or of accepting the will of the people. The ultimate result upon Congress politics of the Delhi Session of 1923 was therefore to afford additional stimulus to the propaganda of the Swaraj Party.

Swarajists Encouraged.

The no-change party did not for some time relax their efforts. They did their best to put the Gaya Programme into operation ; but the response to their requests both for men and for money were discouraging in the extreme. Much was hoped from the Flag agitation at Nagpur, to which a brief reference has been made in an earlier chapter. On the 30th April certain local leaders announced their intention of carrying the " national " flag in procession, partly through the civil station of Nagpur, partly through the town. They departed from the published route and when requested to adhere to it, proclaimed that they would not rest content until they had carried the " national " flag into every part of the civil station whether the residents liked it or not. As the conduct of those constituting the procession was considered likely to be provocative, the authorities feared a conflict between

Efforts of the No-Changers.

National Flag Movement at Nagpur.

the adherents of the "national" flag and those who were still content to accept as the symbol of their allegiance the Union Jack. Processions were accordingly stopped when they attempted to enter the residential quarter, and the district magistrate ordered that there should be no demonstrations in this area without his permission. Probably if the demonstrators had been willing to give assurance that the display would be peaceful and orderly, and not calculated to cause annoyance to other people, they would have been allowed to display the "national" flag in the residential quarter, with as much freedom as they could display it elsewhere in the town. But instead of attempting to gain their object in this manner, they took the opportunity to defy the law. The incident was seized upon by Congress workers in other parts of the country, and volunteers were enlisted to proceed to Nagpur and there to court arrest. The early stages of the movement attracted some little attention, but the hopes which the no-change party built upon it were doomed to frustration. From the earliest stages of its development, it had not received much support from Swarajist opinion, by whom its futility was quickly perceived.

The pro-Council party after observing the truce up to the 30th April, began a powerful and well-organised propaganda in pursuit of their professed objects. When the All-India Congress Committee met in Bombay, at the close of May, the Council entry programme won a notable victory. It was agreed that no propaganda should be carried on amongst voters in furtherance of the Gaya Resolution directing Council boycott. Accordingly the members of the Congress Working Committee, who had hitherto been predominantly of the no-change persuasion, resigned; and a new committee was appointed of whom the majority favoured Council entry. The "national" flag agitation at Nagpur received a certain amount of support; and it was determined to hold a meeting of the Congress Committee during July in the town where the struggle was being pursued. But the victory of the Council party did not go unchallenged. In various parts of the country the no-changers rallied their forces; and when the Congress Committee met in July, there was an attempt to challenge the Bombay compromise. This was defeated; but the power of the no-changers was revealed by the passage of a resolution to the effect that the question of Council boycott should be referred to a special session of the Congress. Meanwhile, the Nagpur flag agitation had failed to bring to the no-changers the credit which they had expected. It attracted less and less attention as time went on;

Progress of the Swarajists.

till at last a stage was reached at which the agitation could only be kept alive by importing volunteers from other parts of the country. The differences now existing between the two sections of the Congress were accompanied by a general breakdown in the efficiency of the local organizations. Signs of insubordination among the district committees became apparent; and the discipline of such volunteers as remained became adversely affected.

But while the politics of the Congress Party seemed thus to be involved in serious embarrassment, their opponents were unable to derive advantage therefrom. The credit of the Liberals had been shaken from various causes, not least their own of lack of confidence in the Reforms. Had the life of the existing Legislatures been protracted for another year, the upshot of events might have been very different; for the real achievements of the new constitution contrasted so strongly with the sterility of non-co-operation that the Liberals would have taken fresh heart, and the Congress party might well have dissolved into a chaos of jarring factions. But as it was, the approach of the election found the Liberals at their weakest. They had for the moment lost their faith in the course which they had been pursuing with such success for the last three years; and fortune did not favour them with any opportunity of winning popularity. The last meeting of the first Assembly, which took place in July 1923, afforded no occasion for any triumphant demonstration of the efficacy of constitutional methods of political advance. The non-official members did their best. They passed a resolution recommending the curtailment of the use of the Governor-General's emergency powers. They passed a resolution which implied a desire for the relaxation of the control of the Secretary of State over the Government of India, and for the framing of rules to transfer more subjects to Ministerial control in the Provinces. They passed a resolution designed to hasten the progress of Indianising the army: they censured Government for interfering, through the Imperial Bank, to prevent the panic to which the failure of the Alliance Bank of Simla had threatened to give rise. But while they forcibly presented the Indian standpoint upon these and certain other matters then engaging the attention of the public, they were unable to secure any dramatic triumph. They did, indeed, transact a large volume of real business of the most solid kind: but it was not by such useful and unostentatious work that the imagination of an ignorant and untried electorate could be stirred. Further, the fates were particularly unfavourable to them in two respects. A resolution was moved calling

upon Government to release Mr. Gandhi and certain of his principal henchmen. The majority of members, true to their convictions, threw it out; and it was counted for an aggravation of their transgressions in the eyes of their opponents. Far more serious, however, was the effect produced by the announcement of the decision of His Majesty's Government in the matter of Kenya. As we have noticed in another place, this decision came as a shock to all shades of Indian opinion. It afforded encouragement to anti-British feeling: it led to criticism of His Majesty's Government, of the Administration which represented that Government in India, and of the section of Indian Moderate opinion which was co-operating with that Administration in the working of the Reforms. The struggle carried on by the Government of India in support of the Indian case: the yeoman service rendered to that case by prominent Liberals, went for the moment unheeded. The Viceroy's outspoken expressions of disappointment: the Assembly's vigorous action in rushing through a reciprocity bill—all these counted little in face of the facts that India's pride had been wounded, and that the Liberals had been guilty of co-operating with a Government under whose régime this tragedy had occurred. In such circumstances, it is small matter for surprise that the confidence of the Liberals received yet another shock:—that their doubts as to the possibility of asserting India's rights through the agency of the present Reforms, already ominously strong, should have been considerably reinforced. So far, then, from being in a position to profit by the confusions of the Congress party, they were themselves perplexed, divided, discouraged, and deprived of that sturdy confidence in their own solid achievements which could alone have commended them to the favour of the electorate.

Misfortunes of the Moderates.

Between July and September, the Swarajists steadily gained ground at the expense of the no-change party. It seemed likely that they would be successful in securing a reversal of the Gaya decision. The no-change party laboured to oppose them, and a bitter but obscure struggle took place, the details of which are not available from published documents. An attempt seems to have been made in Bombay to reverse the May decision of the Congress Committee: but it failed, and the Swarajists advanced one stage nearer victory through the declaration that the Congress Resolution asking the country to boycott the Councils should be suspended. A fresh struggle then broke out as to the venue

Struggles and Triumphs of the Swarajists.

of the Special Congress which was finally to determine the matter. Again the Swarajists were successful in securing the choice of Delhi, where they would be less exposed to the influence of the no-change party. The tide was finally turned in their favour by the release of Mr. Muhammad Ali from jail at the end of August. On September 25th, 1923, the momentous Special Congress was held in Delhi. In the course of the proceedings, Mr. Muhammad Ali announced that he had received a telepathic message from Mr. Gandhi in Yeravda Jail, approving of the modification of the triple boycott in favour of Council entry. Individual congressman were, it was suggested, to be allowed to exercise their discretion in standing as candidates for the Councils. After somewhat heated discussion, a resolution to this effect was carried, the no-change party, which was present in considerable numbers, being for the moment silenced by Mr. Muhammad Ali's bold statement. At the same time, the original non-co-operation programme still exercised sufficient attraction over the minds of many of the assemblage to secure the passage of another resolution designed to facilitate the starting of a campaign of civil disobedience. But in point of fact, the death-knell of the original programme had been sounded, less perhaps from the victory of the Council entry party, than from the conditions existing in the country at large.

Difficulties of the Non-Co-operators.

We have already noticed the disorganization of Congress politics which had resulted from the breach between the Swarajists and the no-changers. This disorganization would have been a serious matter, even had public opinion been prepared to throw itself into political activity with the enthusiasm characterising the previous two years. But in the general apathy which prevailed, its results were disastrous. The Nagpur flag agitation, after dragging wearily along, was finally brought to a close in August. A compromise was arrived at by which a procession, after special precautions had been taken to prevent noise and disorder, was permitted to proceed along a route which did not include the residential area. Great efforts were made to represent the compromise as a victory for the non-co-operators; but as the wishes of Government had been fully met, the attempt to derive political capital from the occurrence was hardly successful. It is interesting to notice that while the issue of the Nagpur Satyagraha campaign was still undecided, the local Legislative Council carried two resolutions asking for the cancellation of the District Magistrate's order restraining the processions, and for the release of all the

Public Apathy.

prisoners arrested. But that there was little feeling on the subject is shown by the fact that on the last day of the Session the Council voted a supplementary demand for the expenses of detaining these same prisoners in jail. With the settlement of the dispute, the persons under detention were released by the Local Government.

But from the point of view of orthodox non-co-operation, there was an obstacle to the prosecution of political activity along the lines laid down by Mr. Gandhi, which was far more serious even than popular apathy. We have already noticed during the year 1922 the gradual emergence of serious communal dissensions. Throughout 1923 the tension between the Hindu and Mussalman masses in various parts of the country increased to a lamentable extent. In March and April, there were open riots of serious nature in Amritsar, Multan, and in other parts of the Punjab. In May, there were further riots at Amritsar, and a riot in Sind. In June and July, there were riots in Moradabad and Meerut, as well as in the Allahabad district of the United Provinces, and a somewhat serious disturbance at Ajmere. In August and September there were further outbreaks of a distressing character at Amritsar, Panipat, Jubbulpore, Gonda, Agra, and Rae Bareili. Most serious of all was a disturbance which occurred at Saharanpur in connection with the Muharram festival. This was among the most formidable religious riots which have occurred in India during recent years, being accompanied by outbreaks of murder, arson and loot. As may well be understood, occurrences such as these served to poison relations between Hindus and Mussulmans throughout an area far more extensive than that covered by the actual outbreaks. Indeed, throughout whole provinces the tension between the two communities reached a degree unprecedented of recent years. The flame of feeling fed upon occurrences which under happier conditions might have passed unnoticed. The redistribution of seats upon municipalities and district boards ; the appointment of particular individuals to official positions ; together with a number of other incidents, of themselves harmless, combined to provide the excuse for fresh bitterness. Much harm was also caused to the relations between the two communities by the propagandising activities of certain adherents of reforming sects. In last year's Statement we referred briefly to the apprehension caused in Mussulman quarters by the so-called Shuddhi movement, which had as its object the reclamation to Hinduism of certain

Serious Communal Dissensions.

Religious Riots.

Religious Propaganda.

communities who were Mussulman merely in name. The progress of this movement naturally excited counter activities on the Muslim side; and when two sets of missionaries were striving within the same area, the effects of their conflict were felt far and wide. The relations between the two communities were further exacerbated by an interesting movement of revival within the fold of orthodox Hinduism. Partly as a result of an increased adherence to the ideals of social reform; and partly from the realisation that the most formidable antagonists of orthodox Hinduism are to be found among those communities whom the system condemns to a position of degradation, there has of late been a distinct inclination even on the part of the more orthodox Hindus to bring the depressed classes and the outcastes within the scope of the caste system. During the year under review, this movement undoubtedly derived considerable impetus from the communal tension to which we have adverted. The impulse in favour of social reform was strengthened by a realisation that the lower castes presented a fruitful field for the operation of Muslim missionaries.

The Shuddhi Movement.

It was therefore felt by many of the leaders of Hinduism that unless the structure of Hindu Society could be consolidated, it was destined to lose in proportion as the other community gained. Considerable attention was therefore devoted to attempts, as it were, to put the Hindu house in order. The fact that it was generally believed that Hindus were the worst sufferers in the event of communal disorders, led the organisers of the movement to lay stress upon the formation of volunteer bands and upon the necessity for physical training. In so doing, they were generally careful to explain that they intended no hostility to the Mussulmans. But in the condition of communal feeling which then existed, such a movement was not calculated to improve the relation between the two faiths.

The Hindu Sabha and Sangathan Movements.

It may well be imagined that such a state of affairs constituted a grave obstacle to the progress of non-co-operation as understood by those who still adhered to Mr. Gandhi's doctrines. It was indeed impossible to disguise the fact that the political *entente* which, at the cost of so much energy, he had established between the two communities, was now a thing of the past. All such movements as civil disobedience were necessarily still-born until a fresh working agreement between the Hindus and the Muhammadans could be established. During the last three months of 1923, prominent congressmen devoted much attention to the

Congressmen and Communal Dissensions.

task of healing communal dissensions. Wherever riots occurred, individual leaders hastened to employ their personal influence in the cause of agreement. But the age-long antagonism between the two faiths had now attained proportions which were beyond the power of any individual, save perhaps Mr. Gandhi himself, to compose. At the Delhi Congress, the supreme necessity, from the political point of view, of bridging the gulf between the two communities, in order once more to present an unbroken front, was fully recognised ; and a small committee was nominated to prepare a draft for a national pact. As a result of the deliberations of this committee, a tentative agreement was formulated which sought to secure the religious liberties of each community and to provide for arbitration in cases of conflict. But the pact did not touch some of the thorniest questions which divide Hindus and Mussulmans in India. In particular it had nothing to say regarding the vexed matter of communal representation in regard to power and office. Subsequently, Mr. C. R. Das and certain of his friends drew up for Bengal the draft of a Hindu-Muslim pact which attempted to lay down a definite proportional representation in all offices for the two communities. Representation to the local bodies was to be in the proportion of 60 to 40 ; 60 to the community which was in the majority and 40 to the minority. It was also proposed that 55 per cent. of Government posts should go to the Muhammadans. However statesmanlike this Bengal pact may have been from the point of view of conciliating Muhammadan opinion, it at once aroused a storm of opposition among Hindus of every political complexion. Indeed, had it been promulgated before instead of after the General Election, it might have influenced in an adverse manner the fortunes of the Swaraj party.

The " National " and the " Bengal " Pacts.

The general apathy of political opinion regarding the non-co-operation programme, combined with the serious divisions which were every day alienating the Hindu and the Muhammadan communities, made it gradually plain to the majority of congressmen that nothing was to be hoped from Mr. Gandhi's legacy. There were, it is true, a considerable number of his devoted adherents, who would countenance no change from his last behests. But even they had been to some extent disconcerted by Mr. Muhammad Ali's announcement of the telepathic message. The upshot of all these circumstances was to place the Swarajists in a very advantageous position. They alone seemed to possess a clear-cut policy, which, however much it might diverge from non-co-operation in the old sense, was at least professedly directed towards

the achievement of the same ends. And while they had agreed not to utilise the formal machinery of the Congress for the enhancement of their own prospects in the elections, there was a natural tendency on the part of all local Congress organizations, save those who happened to be under the control of convinced members of the no-change party, to strain every nerve for their assistance. Moreover, the Swarajists had succeeded, by careful and painstaking toil, in constructing a very efficient party machine of their own. They had not dissipated their energies in such futile demonstrations as the Nagpur flag campaign. They had collected funds ; they had enlisted workers ; they had organised a party press. For some months they had been engaged in conducting a steady and well-directed propaganda among the electorate. Having now received permission from the Congress to contest the seats for the Councils, they naturally emerged into the public eye as the main protagonists, from the nationalist point of view, in the approaching struggle for the control of the new constitutional machinery.

For the sake of clearness we may now briefly recapitulate the position of the parties in India on the eve of the elections of November 1923.

The Independents.

From what has been said in the preceding paragraphs it will be realised that the two principal groups seeking election to the Reformed Councils were the Swarajists on one side and the Liberals on the other. It is however a mistake to suppose that all candidates were included within one or other of these two categories. There remained an extremely important class who can best be described by the designation of Independent. The term, it is true, is of little value as a political label ; for those who stood as Independent candidates belonged to almost every shade of opinion. In considering the election situation, however, it is important to remember that the Independent candidates had as a rule one thing in common. They were generally men of local influence. Often indeed they were landholders. But in any case, they possessed a definite status within their constituency which enabled them to stand without reference to a party ticket. And it is important to remember that while, for reasons we shall proceed shortly to examine, the Swarajists were largely successful in their campaign against the Liberals, they did not enjoy anything like the same measure of victory over those Independents who refused to subscribe to their principles.

The main interest of the election centered of course in the struggle between the Liberals and the Swarajists. For three years the Liberals

had been securely entrenched within the new Councils, and in the course of that period had placed to their credit practical achievements of the utmost moment. Steady, if undramatic, progress had been made towards the acquisition by India of Responsible Government. Both in the Central and in the Provincial spheres, the Executive had shown itself as a rule increasingly responsive to the wishes of the elected members. Several outstanding questions, of which the Punjab grievance and the Khilafat matter provide the most remarkable instances, had been dealt with along lines for which the Legislature had pressed. In many other directions, moreover, substantial steps had been taken towards the fulfilment of national aspirations. Among these may be mentioned the schemes for the Indianization of the Army and of the Public Services ; the vindication of India's claim to fiscal autonomy and the recognition of the principle that the tariff policy might be employed for fostering national industries ; the removal from the Statute Book of many Laws of the kind popularly called " Repressive " ; and the removal of all but the last traces of racial discrimination in criminal trials. Yet with all these achievements, so solid and so praiseworthy, the Liberals found themselves, as we have already given some reason to show, in a very disadvantageous position *vis à vis* the Electorate.

Position of the Liberals.

Solid Achievements.

Even from their very triumphs they reaped little credit. In none of the directions in which they had achieved progress, had they been able to satisfy, at a stroke as it were, the full force of the national demand. They were accordingly blamed because their gains were not as far-reaching as public opinion desired ; the consideration that the work accomplished had called for skill, courage, and a statesmanlike sense of compromise being entirely overlooked. Indeed, their very utilization in such admirable fashion of the opportunities provided under the new Reforms, had called into existence a formidable opposition determined to wrest from them the position they had enjoyed during the preceding three years. Worst of all from the point of view of their election chances, was the fact that the Liberal Party were in many quarters identified with Government. Both in the Central and in the Local Legislatures, they had courageously lent their support to the official policy against which the non-co-operation campaign had dashed itself only to be shattered. The support which they had rendered to Government in times of crisis had been of incalculable moral value to the Executive ; and it is

Little Credit.

therefore no wonder that disillusioned non-co-operators blamed the Liberals both for the whole break-down of Mr. Gandhi's campaign, and for the imprisonment of the Mahatma himself. In the Provinces also, as we have noticed in a previous chapter, there had been a failure on the part of public opinion to distinguish between the reserved and the transferred sides of the Government. The ministers had been popularly identified with the executive councillors, and regarded as little else than an additional wing of the Bureaucracy. This misapprehension, strengthened as it was by the fact that Liberal Ministers generally supported their executive colleagues when the exigencies of the political situation demanded strong action, was not counterbalanced by any such development in the " National Building " Departments as might have enabled the ministerial party to appeal with confidence to the electorate on the merits of their record. This state of affairs was in no way the fault of the ministers themselves. Considering the financial disabilities under which the Reformed Constitution laboured, the progress achieved in almost every part of the country in such spheres as education, public health, sanitation, industrial expansion, and the like, must be pronounced creditable. But the fact remains that nowhere had it been possible to register any such dramatic achievements as alone could have appealed to the imagination of the electorate. Moreover, it must be remembered, the practical good sense of the Liberals, which had induced them to come forward and accept office when they judged their duty to the country demanded such action, had long been imputed to them as a reproach when the catch-word of self-sacrifice was on the lips of their opponents. In short, at a time when the principal title to the favour of an untried and uninstructed electorate was uncompromising opposition to Government; and when the greatest patriot was he who had suffered the longest term of imprisonment for defiance of Government orders, the Liberals were identified, partly by the course of events, and partly by the skilful propaganda of their antagonists, with all that for which Government stood. Further, it cannot be denied that their three years' monopoly of power in the Council had to some extent weakened their coherence as a party. The absence from the Legislatures, both Central and Local, of any body of opinion which might have presented a clear cut opposition to liberal policy, was productive of unfortunate results from the party standpoint. There was

Their Identification with Official Policy.

Political Consequences of Financial Stringency.

Office-holding a Reproach.

a natural tendency for the elected members of the Legislature to form themselves into groups and caves. Opposition to ministerial policy crystallised round personal differences rather than along the lines of divergent opinion. In the Legislatures, the elected members, while suffering in popular estimation from their general support of Government policy, tended to slip into the attitude of general opposition to the executive characteristic of the Minto-Morley Councils, thus losing for themselves such solid advantages as they might otherwise have reaped from their participation in the work of government. This became particularly noticeable in the course of the summer of 1923. There can indeed be little doubt that the openly expressed dissatisfaction of the Liberal Party with the working of the Reforms, arising particularly out of Lord Reading's certification of the salt tax, so far from commending them to the favour of the electorate, was received by their opponents as a condemnation out of their own mouths of the whole policy which they had been pursuing for the last three years. In other words, their doubts and hesitations as to the efficacy of the Reforms, their lack of confidence in the rightness of the course they had been steering, appeared, alike to their opponents and to their constituencies, as an acknowledgment of defeat and as a manifestation of despair. They were as a rule unfitted both by their experience of administrative difficulties, and by their temperamental reasonableness, to outshine the Swarajists in the popular pursuit of vilifying the Government; yet in the judgment of many, their condemnation of official policy appeared as nothing more than an effort directed towards this end. Further, the loss of reputation which they suffered in consequence of the salt tax incident was greatly aggravated through the announcement, but a few months prior to the elections, of the Kenya decision. Their natural disappointment, and their strongly voiced disapproval of the policy of the British Government, were accepted among their opponents as but another sympton that the Liberals were repenting of the part they had played in the operation of the Reforms. Thus discouraged, disunited among themselves, with no effective party organization, the Liberals entered the fight against their Swarajist opponents.

Effects of their Tenure of Power.

Their Loss of Confidence.

While the Swarajists naturally profited from the weakness of the Liberal position, and from their skilful identification of the Moderate Party with the misdeeds of the Executive, they themselves

Position of the Swarajists.

enjoyed certain additional advantages denied to their opponents. It is impossible to overestimate the value of the permission they had received from the Delhi Special Congress to contest the elections. While in theory the Swarajists remained a separate organization within the Congress, they did not fail to enjoy the advantages naturally arising from their intimate connection with that body. This association gave them the right to utilize Mr. Gandhi's name. They came before the electorate as his men ; pledged to achieve the objects to which he had devoted himself, although at the cost of a certain deviation, from his policy. They issued a party manifesto, in which they laid stress upon the fact that they were entering the Councils in order to ensure that the new constitutional machinery should not be exploited for anti-national purposes. They intended to present an ultimatum to Government, demanding the right of the Indian people to control their own destiny. In the event of the demand being refused, the party pledged itself to a policy of "uniform, continuous and consistent obstruction with a view to make Government through the Assembly and the Councils impossible." The Swarajists were therefore able to maintain that their position was a logical development from the principles of Mr. Gandhi's original campaign. The only distinction, so they argued, was that instead of attempting to destroy the Councils by boycott—a project which had now been proved impracticable—they had set themselves to wreck the machinery of the constitution from within. That this change was in effect one of vital principle, was a point upon which, for obvious reasons, they laid little stress. Mr. Gandhi had regarded the Councils as something unholy ; something with which no patriotic Indian ought to defile himself by contact. There was all the difference between such a position, and the programme now marked out by the Swaraj Party. For whatever their ultimate intentions might be, it was impossible to disguise the fact they they were in effect associating themselves with the machinery of the new constitution.

Co-operation or Non-Co-operation ?

This machinery, it is true, they proposed to utilise for their own purposes, and, if those purposes were not achieved, to wreck. But the fact remained that they were accepting its existence at least as a starting point; that they were entering the Councils and transferring to the constitutional sphere a large proportion of those activities which had hitherto been operative only in the wilderness of extra-constitutional effort. This fundamental departure from the old principles of the non-co-operation campaign had of course for long been perceived by the no-change

party; who did their best to hinder the Swarajists from employing the influence of the Congress machinery in furtherance of their own candidature. But the fact that the Swarajists presented a policy which, in contrast to the blind alley the no-changers were following, revealed real possibilities of advance, was of itself sufficient to commend them to the favour of a predominant portion of nationalist opinion. With the prestige of Mr. Gandhi behind them, the Swarajists were thus enabled to conduct a campaign of great vigour, against which the Liberals could oppose little but the individual prestige of prominent party representatives. Indeed, the programme of the Swarajists was from every point of view calculated to overshadow that of the Liberals. When both parties attacked Government, the advantage naturally lay with those who conducted the attack with greater virulence and less restraint. There was scarcely a point put forward by the Swarajist which the Liberals were able effectively to controvert. The Swarajists stated that the Reforms were unsatisfactory; that immediate advance was essential; that the utmost pressure must be brought to bear upon the Executive; that the Kenya decision was monstrous. To all these statements the Liberals could only register their agreement. They had indeed an opportunity of overbidding their opponents, when the news of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru's triumph at the Imperial Conference came to hand. But this news arrived too late to exercise a serious influence upon the course of the election; and was promptly discounted by the whole force of the Swaraj party machine. In a word, to oppose the compact, unified, and well disciplined Swaraj Party, who enjoyed a position of predominant advantage owing to the prevailing political atmosphere, the Liberals could put forward only a disorganized band of non-obstructionist candidates of varying shades of moderate or extreme opinion, who appeared oblivious of the necessity of sinking differences on minor issues in order to secure compactness and efficiency.

A Powerful Programme.

As to the manner in which the elections contests were conducted, there is not much to be said. There were the usual complaints from both sides of unfair tactics; but in general it seems that the fight was cleanly conducted. The number of voters appearing at the polls was everywhere much greater than had been the case in the first election. Proportions of forty and fifty per cent. were quite common in some hotly contested constituencies. For the Legislative Assembly itself, out of some 800,000 voters in contested constituencies more than 350,000

Conduct of the Elections.

registered their votes. In certain places it was noticed that the Swarajists, owing to their superior organization and their refusal to permit of split votes, captured the majority of the seats with the aid of a minority of the voters.

With all the advantages they enjoyed, it is a matter of surprise that the Swaraj candidates were not as a whole returned in greater numbers.

Result of the Elections.

Only in the Central Provinces did they enjoy a clear majority over all parties. In Bengal, they represented the strongest individual group; but without the aid of a coalition, could not hope to enjoy supremacy. In Bombay and in the United Provinces, although they were returned in considerable numbers, they did not constitute the largest group. In Madras, they were but a handful as compared with the Ministerialists. In the Punjab and in Bihar and Orissa they were extremely weak. In the Central Legislature, upon which they had concentrated a large proportion of their forces, they succeeded in capturing just under half the elected seats in the Assembly. The fact is, that while the Swarajists had been very largely successful in displacing the Liberals, against whom they had directed so much of their heavy artillery, their success against Independents of the land-holding class, and other men of local influence in their constituency, was very much less striking. The victory was however a real one; the result of the elections enabled the Swarajists to displace their Moderate rivals as the exponents of the political ideals of the Indian intelligentia.

Strength and Weakness of the Swarajists.

The year closed, as usual, with the meetings of the two great parties representative of non-official opinion. The National Congress, which met at Coconada in the Madras Presidency, was confronted with three principal problems. The first was the task of maintaining a working harmony between the triumphant Swarajists and the still considerable element of "no-changers," who adhered to the ideas of Mr. Gandhi's original campaign. With this was intimately connected the second problem, that of laying down a constructive policy for the ensuing year—a policy to which both parties could give their adherence. But the third, and perhaps the most formidable, was that of communal dissensions. It may well be doubted whether any of these problems was susceptible in December 1923 of a real solution. Each one was so complex; was attended by interests so diverse; and contained in itself elements of such danger; that the Congress probably did very well when it con-

Problems before the National Congress.

trived to avoid an actual split. No real adjustment of the relations between the Swarajists and the no-changers was found to be possible; although at the cost of consistency a definite breach was again averted. The Delhi compromise was re-affirmed; but so also was Mr. Gandhi's original programme of the triple boycott in which the boycott of Councils was included. The programme of constructive work was again put forward; and the Working Committee was asked to arrange for a scheme of departmental organization which should facilitate progress along the lines laid down. It is significant, however, that the desire of ce tain sections to alter the Congress "creed" in such a manner as to lay down complete independence as the goal to be achieved, was discountenanced by the majority of the leaders present. There was indeed a general reluctance to increase the fuel upon which the flames of dissension were still feeding; and the resolutions of the Congress were therefore as a whole couched in more general terms than in preceding years. The gathering was naturally no more successful in its attempt to heal communal dissensions. There was a general feeling that Hindu-Muslim tension could only be alleviated along certain broad lines of all-India policy; and much attention was devoted to the consideration of measures designed for this end. The "National Pact" was referred for re-examination to a Committee; but Mr. Das's draft "Bengal Pact" excited great opposition among the majority of Hindu delegates. It is however to be noticed that the Khilafat Conference, which sat side by side with the Indian National Congress, was much attracted by the "Bengal Pact"; and referred this agreement, together with the "National Pact" to its own committee for examination. In many ways the most important feature of the meeting at Coconada was the strengthening of the Swaraj Party machinery. Since as a result of the confirmation both of the Delhi compromise and of the triple boycott, it seemed likely that both the changers and the no-changers would be free to pursue their own course, the Swarajist leaders determined to cement in the most effective manner the discipline of their group. The General Council of the Swaraj Party accordingly laid down certain rules for the conduct of party members in every Legislature, declaring that candidates elected on the Swaraj ticket would be held rigorously to their pledge. It was determined that the demand the party proposed to present to Government should take the shape of an ultimatum calling for the release of all political prisoners, for the repeal of all repressive laws, and for the summoning of a National Convention to lay down the lines of the future consti-

Swaraj Party Organisation.

tution for India. The policy of obstruction and wreckage which would be pursued in the event of Government proving recalcitrant, was again reiterated. It was further laid down that no member of the Swaraj Party was to accept office, to offer himself as a candidate for Select Committees or to accept a seat thereon ; and that no member was to take part as an individual in the ordinary current business of the House. Point was lent to the first of these restrictions by the fact that the both in the Central Provinces and in Bengal, the leaders of the Swaraj Party, as representing in one case a clear majority, and in the other the largest group, of the elected members, had been invited to constitute a Ministry. In both cases the invitation had been refused ; with the consequence that the Governor concerned had felt himself obliged to nominate as his Ministers gentlemen who did not command a majority of votes in the Council.

The Liberal Federation.

The Liberal Federation met at Poona under the shadow of its heavy defeat at the polls. But the proceedings revealed no symptoms of discouragement. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, who presided, had recently enjoyed a personal triumph at the Imperial Conference, as a result of which he had opened a door leading to the reconsideration of the Kenya decision. There was a general disposition to attribute the failure of the party in the recent elections to the unfavourable circumstances in which the campaign had been conducted rather than to any mistakes which had characterised the Liberal policy during the preceding three years. Indeed that policy was re-affirmed with added emphasis, and the majority of delegates present endorsed in the strongest terms their faith in constitutional methods of political advance. The fact that the Swarajists had been obliged to follow the lead of the Liberals, and to enter the Reformed Councils, was in itself no small solatium. But it is also to be noticed that great pains were taken to demonstrate the falsity of the accusation, so freely put forward by the Swarajists, that the Liberals were a mere appendage of the Executive Government. The party bound itself to press immediately for a revision of the existing constitution, displaying no less anxiety than the Swarajists themselves for early constitutional advance. As in previous years, the resolutions moved were of a most business like character, being directly associated with practical measures for the achievement of practical ends. The Conference, for example, laid down a series of clear-cut proposals for accelerating the Indianization of the Army and the Public Services. They also pressed for radical retrenchment in military expenditure. They were equally uncompro-

mising in the matter of the grievances of Indians Overseas. They further revealed their acumen by laying stress upon the necessity for a whole time party organization supported by adequate funds.

The year 1924 therefore opened with the Swarajists in the Councils and most of the Liberals outside. Both parties were in good heart; the Swarajists because they had triumphed at the poll; the Liberals because they regarded the new position of the Swarajist as demonstrating the correctness of their own policy. But while in the matter of tactics, the two parties were radically divided, there was a substantial identity in their aim. In the first place, both Swarajists and Liberals were determined to press for early constitutional advance. They both agreed that the present constitution was unsatisfactory from the point of view of the national aspirations of India. They were both determined, each in their own particular manner, to bring pressure upon the Executive in order to force an early revision of the constitution. Both were agreed upon the necessity of taking measures to vindicate the rights of Indians Overseas; both looked forward to the Indianization of the Army and of the Public Services; to the institution of a protective tariff; and to the encouragement of national industries. On the other hand, in methods there was much difference between the two. The recent political change in England which had brought the Labour Party into power, inspired the Liberals with the hope that a concession of some kind would soon be made to India's desire for constitutional advance. They were accordingly disposed, while not ceasing to press their point of view on the authorities, to refrain from such action as might be embarrassing to His Majesty's Government. And while they regarded the machinery of the Government of India Act as unsatisfactory, they were content to operate, as it were, within the general scheme for which that Act stood. They desired the early appointment of a Royal Commission to revise the existing constitution. They complained that the rate of advance had been too slow; and they demanded its acceleration. But as practical men they showed no disposition to quarrel with the general line of procedure foreshadowed in the declaration of August 20th, 1917, and since followed by British statesmen. They stood uncompromisingly for progress; but for progress by constitutional development from the foundations already laid. On the other hand the attitude of the Swarajists was entirely different. They were inclined to question the rightness of the entire premises

The Year 1924: Aims of Swarajists and of Liberals.

Divergent Methods.

upon which the scheme of Indian Constitutional advance had hitherto been based. In particular, they did not accept the preamble of the Government of India Act, which made the British Parliament a judge of the time and manner of India's progress. They desired to set up their own machinery for the complete overhauling not merely of the existing constitutional position, but of the whole theory of the relations between India and the British Parliament. At the same time, it was very doubtful whether their position was strong enough in the Legislature to enable them successfully to undertake a programme so radical. Where circumstances were in their favour, however, they shortly proceeded to carry out their pledges. In the Central Provinces, after the Swarajist leaders had refused to accept office as Ministers, they proceeded to vote down every Government measure indiscriminately. They carried a vote of want of confidence against the Ministers, and followed this up at a later stage by fixing the Ministerial salaries at the farcical figure of Rs. 2 per annum. When the budget of the Central Provinces Government was presented, the Swarajist majority refused all the supplies which it lay in their power to vote. The Governor was thereupon obliged to put into operation the emergency powers conferred upon him by the constitution. So far as the reserved subjects were concerned, the expenditure which the Council had refused to sanction was restored, with the exception of some items which could be postponed without serious hinderance to the administration. In the sphere of the transferred subjects the consequences of their action were more serious; for the Governor's power was limited to providing those funds which he considered indispensable for carrying on the essential functions of a civilised Government. Had full effect been given to the Council's vote, colleges and schools would have been closed; the work of hospitals and dispensaries would have come to a standstill; roads and buildings would no longer have been kept in repair; and thousands of officials belonging to various grades in the provincial services would have been dismissed. In a word, from the point of view of the general public, government would have been limited to the bare requirements of law and order. All "beneficent" activities would have been suspended. It was considered necessary to obviate consequences so serious; and although all schemes of development and new expenditure on the transferred side were held in abeyance; the essential services were maintained. But since the Council had refused to vote salaries for the Ministers, the office of Minister could not be filled; and

Swarajist Tactics.

In the Central Provinces.

the Governor was obliged to take over the administration of the transferred subjects, the Central Provinces being thus deprived of the most important advance towards self-Government made by the Government of India Act. It is thus plain that in this locality the professed objects of the Swaraj Party in their most absolute form have been achieved. The result of their action would doubtless have been attended by no little political danger to themselves, had the Central Provinces possessed an educated and instructed electorate. On the other hand, it must be remembered that while the Swarajists have succeeded in securing the temporary suspension of the most characteristic features of the reformed constitution, they have altogether failed to bring the machinery of Government to a standstill. They have taken full advantage of the present divorce between power and responsibility which has proved in practice a feature of the new constitution; but it is yet to be seen whether by doing so they have accelerated in any degree the political advance which is their main object. And unless this should prove to be the case, history will assuredly condemn their demonstration as an expensive failure.

We have seen that in the case of the Central Provinces, the Swaraj Party employed their power in a manner at once ruthless and effective.

In other Local Legislatures.

Elsewhere, in the majority of provincial legislatures, they were far less successful. Their strength as a rule only enabled them to exert pressure upon the Executive when they operated in combination with other Parties. And as it was their professed intention to avoid defeat in the lobby, their opportunities for influencing the course of business were strictly limited. In the Punjab, in the United Provinces, in Bihar and Orissa, in Madras and in Bombay, the new Councils did not display any disposition markedly different from their predecessors. In Bengal, on the other hand, the Swarajists succeeded in forming a coalition consisting largely of Muhammadan members attracted by the "Bengal Pact," which during the earlier part of the session gave them a majority inside the House. They succeeded in carrying resolutions demanding the release of political prisoners, despite the recrudescence of the anarchic movement to which reference has been made in a previous chapter. They also succeeded by one single vote in refusing to grant salaries to the Ministers and they threw out the important head of General Administration from among the Demands for Grants which the Executive placed before them. But on the whole, their success in Bengal, despite

In Bengal.

the personal leadership of Mr. C. R. Das, was considerably less striking. Their working majority, even with the aid of the coalition, was so narrow that it was liable to reversal and on more than one occasion they sustained a defeat, notably in their attempt to throw out the Police Budget. Before the end of the session a rally of a considerable number of non-obstructionists in response to an appeal made by the Governor, combined with symptoms of growing independence on the part of the Muhammadan bloc, rendered the position of the Swarajists more precarious than ever. On the whole, the Bengal Administration emerged from the first session without serious embarrassment.

The Central Legislature.

While in the Provincial sphere the Swarajists were successful in making their influence felt only in two Councils, the conduct of their business in the Central Legislature proved to be a dominating feature of the session. The new Assembly was very different from its predecessor. Many prominent Liberals had disappeared, and their places were taken by members of the Swaraj Party. There was a strong section of Independents but they included many new men. There were indeed certain notable figures, who provided a link with the old House, while as a result of the process of nomination certain members of the former Liberal group were found in their accustomed places. But the new House differed from the old in including a large number of those leaders whose names are well-known in Indian Nationalist circles. Among them may be mentioned Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Pandit Motilal Nehru, Mr. V. J. Patel, Mr. M. A. Jinnah, Lala Hans Raj, Mr. Bepin Chandra Pal and Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas. Out of the total strength of some 140 members, the Swarajists counted 45 adherents in the Assembly. But their strength consisted in the fact that they were compact and well disciplined. The conservatives and official elements formed a bloc of approximately the same strength; and the balance of the Chamber was composed of Independents of one kind or another. By profession, the second Legislative Assembly, like the first, was predominantly a gathering of lawyers. But with the exception of some twenty or thirty well-known figures of various political complexion, the average age of the rank and file of the new Legislative Assembly was distinctly lower than that of its predecessor.

The Viceroy's Speech.

According to precedent, the business of the Session began by the members taking their oath of allegiance. On January 31st, 1924, Lord Reading formally opened the new Session. As usual, his speech contained a clear summary

of current events. As His Excellency's announcements upon these topics have been referred to in other places, it is only necessary here to mention that he dealt with the successful conclusion of Peace with Turkey; with the easing of the Afghan tension; and with the position of Indians Overseas. In connection with this last matter, His Excellency struck a hopeful note, reminding the Legislature of the advantages which the country had derived from the Imperial Conference, and pledging his Government to maintain the utmost vigilance in safeguarding the interests of Indians abroad. Somewhat naturally, it was Lord Reading's remarks concerning the internal situation which excited the greatest interest among his hearers. He sounded a note of serious warning regarding the recrudescence of anarchy in Bengal; and explained the reasons which had led his Government to confine certain of the persons concerned in conspiracy under the provisions of Regulation III of 1818. He referred in detail to the precautions which the Administration was taking in order to prevent abuse of these emergency measures; and he affirmed that every care would be taken to see that no individual suffered injustice because of the gravity of the situation, or would be deprived of his right to an impartial investigation of the charges made against him on account of the immediate necessity of preventive measures. Adverting to the question of constitutional advance, Lord Reading stated that the recent change of Government in England rendered it incumbent upon him to refrain from certain observations he would otherwise have been tempted to offer; he made it clear however, that the policy of the Reforms had been introduced with the approval of all political parties; that it was the policy of the British nation; and was unlikely to be affected in its essentials by current political changes. He concluded his address by deprecating any such check to the progress of the Reforms as might be constituted by an attempt to destroy their continuity. He emphasised the fact that no change of a constitutional and peaceful character could be effected save with the consent of the British Parliament, who would emphatically repudiate and reject an attempt to force their hand by violently destructive methods. He appealed for calm judgment and mutual understanding in order that the new Legislature might carry India forward to the fulfilment of her legitimate aims.

Formation of the Nationalist Party.

It was early apparent to the leaders of the Swaraj Party that without the assistance of a substantial number of votes from individuals outside their organization, they would be unable to command a majority in the Legislature.

They found their opportunity of attracting allies in the existence of a general desire, common to all the elected members in the House, for further constitutional advance. A Resolution had been tabled by Mr. Rangachariar, recommending the Governor General in Council to take steps to revise the Government of India Act in such a manner as to secure for India Provincial Autonomy in the Provinces and full self-governing Dominion status within the Empire. While this proposition was far less radical than that to which the Swarajists had committed themselves in their election campaign, it provided them with an opportunity of coming to terms with a certain number of Independents. By February 6th, a coalition of some 70 members had been formed, who agreed that if Government made no satisfactory response to a resolution demanding immediate constitutional progress, a policy of obstruction would be initiated by the combined group which, subsequently became known as the Nationalist Party. It did not escape the notice of observers that the formation of such a coalition indicated a further departure by the Swarajists from the inherent principles of Mr. Gandhi's non-co-operation campaign. The Independents who had joined the Swarajists in the formation of the Nationalist Party were very far from favouring tactics of wreckage and destruction; and it was therefore plain that at least so far as their action inside the House was concerned, the Swarajists were committed to constitutional methods of procedure. It is further to be noticed that the Independent members of the Nationalist Party stipulated that obstruction should never be launched unless it was agreed to by three-fourths of the combined strength. Several prominent Independents were not satisfied even by this precaution, and strenuously refused to compromise their future actions by setting their hand to any pledge.

Mr. Rangachariar's Resolution.

The debate on Mr. Rangachariar's resolution was by far the most momentous of the whole Session. It lasted for three whole days, and was largely responsible for determining the relations between the Legislature and the Executive for the remainder of the period during which the House was sitting. The Nationalist Party had agreed to throw their weight in support of the amendment put forward by Mr. Motilal Nehru, which called for the convening of a Round Table Conference to recommend a scheme for the establishment of full responsible government in India. This scheme, after being placed before a newly elected Legislature, was to be submitted to the British Parliament for embodiment in a Statute. Early in the debate, a clear-cut division manifested

itself between the non-official and the official side of the House. Mr. Rangachariar in moving his motion stated that after three years' experience he was convinced that the present constitutional machinery was unsuited to the country's true advancement. Everyone, he said, was dissatisfied with the existing scheme; and the time was now ripe for its revision. Sir Malcolm Hailey, who was then Home Member, took an early opportunity of indicating the attitude of Government. He stated that the many interests concerned had a right to know if any radical change in the system of administration was contemplated at an early date. He stated in emphatic terms that the answer was in the negative. The demand for immediate Dominion status was entirely new; and it was inconsistent with comparatively recent pronouncements made by leaders on the non-official side of the House. It was, further, inconsistent with the specific provision of the Government of India Act that advance towards self-government was to take the form of successive stages. He also pointed out some of the difficulties which stood in the way of the grant of Home Rule on Dominion lines; mentioning in particular India's inability to conduct her own defence unaided; the constitutional position of the Indian States; and the grave problem presented by the minority communities. He did not say that these problems were insoluble, but he maintained that some promise of their eventual solution was a condition precedent to the constitutional change now demanded. But neither His Majesty's Government nor the Government of India had any desire to stand still. Sir Malcolm promised an immediate investigation of complaints against the working of the present scheme. In a subsequent speech he amplified the announcement by stating that if the enquiry revealed the possibility of advance within the Act, the Government of India were willing to make recommendations to that effect. On the other hand, if no advance was found possible without amending the constitution, the question of immediate progress must be regarded as an entirely open issue. He promised that the results of the investigation, before being finally presented to Parliament, would, if the Secretary of State permitted, be fully discussed in the Indian Legislature and elsewhere. This announcement, coming as it did with the full authority of His Majesty's Government caused great disappointment to the non-official members of the Legislature. It soon became clear that there was no possibility of rapprochement between the official and non-official sides of the House. Member after member em-

Attitude of Government.

Its Effect.

phasised the unanimity with which all sections of politically-minded India combined to demand immediate political advance. But most remarkable of all were the tone and temper of the speeches delivered by the leaders of the Swaraj Party. Mr. Motilal Nehru, while challenging the justice of the Preamble of the Government of India Act, made it plain that his party could not be dismissed as wreckers. He was not asking for responsible government to be handed over, as it were, tied up in a bundle. His party had come there to offer their co-operation. If the Government would receive this co-operation, they would find that the Swarajists were their men. If not, the Swarajists would stand on their rights, and continue to be non-co-operators. The difficulties which the Home Member had urged as combining to hinder the immediate grant of responsible government were, said Mr. Motilal Nehru, fully provided for by the machinery of the Round Table Conference. He urged in conclusion, that the opportunity offered at the present juncture should not be thrown away; for no good was done by a continuance of the circumstances in which a section of the community were standing outside the constitution. The effect of this speech was enhanced by a large number of other representations. Among them may be mentioned that of Sir Sivaswami Aiyer, who, while dissociating himself from the motion to call a Round Table Conference, and preferring the Royal Commission method prescribed by the Act, dwelt upon the hostility now manifested by the people of India towards the Administration. He pressed for an immediate change in the existing constitutional machinery, lest this hostility should spread into irrational hatred of all things British, such as would work irreparable damage to the Indo-British connection. Broadly speaking, the only dissentient voices on the non-official side were those of certain representatives of minority communities. These speakers, for the most part either European or Mussulman, urged that the settlement of communal differences must precede further constitutional advance. Very interesting in this connection was the contribution made to the debate by Captain Hira Singh, a representative not of the intelligenzia but of the martial classes. He stated that his objection to immediate constitutional advance was based upon the fact that his countrymen, while fitted for high administrative positions in civil life, were still unable to control the complicated and powerful machine of the Indian Army. He pointed out that in the past, armies had frequently played their own part in the course of politics; and he felt sure that for

Attitude of the Swarajists and others.

Dissentients.

the present it would not be safe to entrust the Indian forces to any other agency than the existing higher command. In the space at our disposal it is unfortunately impossible to mention the many striking speeches which were delivered both on the main resolution and on the various amendments supplementary thereto. Several Independent members, notably Dr. Gour, and Mr. Bepin Chandra Pal, urged Government to adopt some formula or principle of conciliation. There was also a considerable body of opinion in favour of allowing the administration recently called to power in England an opportunity of making up their minds as to the situation in India. But the compact and well-disciplined forces of the Nationalist Party made it apparent that Mr. Motilal Nehru's amendment would be carried. Indeed, in the last resort Mr. Rangachariar withdrew his main resolution in its favour. Speakers on the Government side did not fail to argue the difficulties of applying to conditions in India any such theoretical maxims as the principle of self-determination. They also made much play with the discrepancy between Swarajist declarations outside the Council; and the professions of the party leaders since they had allied themselves with a section of the Independents. Mr. Patel emphasised once more that the Swarajists had never accepted the preamble to the Government of India Act, making the British Parliament judges of the time and measure of India's constitutional advance; but did not explain the contrast between the old principles of non-co-operation and the attitude that the Swaraj Party was now adopting. The Independents, for their part, were only concerned with the operations of the Swarajist within the walls of the House; and were not to be detached from their Allies by any reminders of formal election pledges. In the event Mr. Motilal Nehru's amendment was carried by 64 votes to 48, practically all the elected members of the House entering the Lobby in its support.

Course of the Debate.

Conclusion.

For the remainder of the Session the business of the House was very largely controlled by the Swarajists, whose party discipline generally succeeded in securing them a working majority in the conclaves of the Nationalist group. The dissatisfaction of the generality of Independent members with the attitude which Government had taken up in the matter of constitutional reform, rendered them as a rule willing to follow the lead of the Swarajists. But the path of the Swarajists was not free from difficulties. On more than one occasion during the

Swarajists' Dominance and Difficulties.

remainder of the Session, communal differences threatened to raise their heads; and troubles were only averted by the personal appeals of the distinguished leaders. Further, it is highly probable that the Swarajists were somewhat anxious as to their relations, present and future, with Mr. Gandhi. Mr. Gandhi's health had for some time been unsatisfactory; and early in January, symptoms of appendicitis developed. Great anxiety was displayed all over India, irrespective of political considerations, at Mr. Gandhi's precarious condition. But on the 12th January, an operation was successfully performed; and a wave of relief spread over the country. This was coupled by urgent demands from many sections of public opinion that Mr. Gandhi should be released. As his health continued to cause anxiety to his medical advisers, the Government of Bombay announced in February 5th that in deference to the opinion of the doctors, they had decided that Mr. Gandhi should be removed to the sea side for a prolonged period of convalescence. With the concurrence of the Government of India, they further determined to remit unconditionally the unexpired portion of his sentence. For some time Mr. Gandhi was too weak to familiarise himself with the intricacies of current politics; but in a published letter he proceeded before long to express his adherence to the original plan of the triple boycott. The position of the Swarajist leaders thus became delicate. It is generally understood from the newspaper press that they took an early opportunity of approaching him with the request that, pending his final decision upon the considerations which had induced them to depart from his boycott of the Councils, he would suffer them to continue as members of the Central and the Local Legislatures. Mr. Gandhi, influenced by the fact that he was still far from being in health, consented. It may however be noted that subsequent to the termination of the Session, he resumed his discussion with the Swarajist leaders; and up to the moment when this Statement was being prepared, it would appear that no agreement had been arrived at.

Release of Mr. Gandhi.

For the moment, however, the danger was averted, and the Swarajists were enabled to consolidate their position in the Assembly. The most notable feature of the remainder of the Session was their handling of the Budget. With the broader characteristics of this incident we have dealt in a previous chapter. It will be recalled that the Assembly, dominated by the Nationalist Party, took the unprecedented course of throwing out the first four heads under the demand for grants. Pundit Motilal

The Budget.

Nehru made it clear from the outset that his motion was not concerned with the various items included in the demands. His party proposed on general grounds to refuse the money vote because of their grievances against the Government of India. In this connection, he referrred particularly to the statement made shortly before by Lord Olivier in the House of Lords. Mr. Motilal Nehru while thanking the Secretary of State for the tone and temper of his speech, which was on the whole extremely gratifying to Indian opinion, remarked that in so far as the Secretary of State's remarks reaffirmed the attitude taken up by Government in the matter of constitutional advance, it could only be considered as a refusal of the Indian demand. Mr. Motilal continued that his present motion had nothing to do with the wrecking or destroying policy of the non-co-operators; and was in effect a perfectly constitutional and legitimate means of drawing attention to the grievances of the country. From the official side an endeavour was made to demonstrate that such refusal of supply as Mr. Motilal Nehru contemplated, was quite unjustified by the circumstances of the case; being further vitiated by an essential unreality, since the Nationalist Party knew full well that the disastrous consequences of any such action would be obviated by the employment of the Governor General's emergency powers. These arguments produced some effect; but the majority of Independent members were attracted by the idea of registering their disappointment in what they regarded as a manner based upon English constitutional precedent. They had hoped very much from the accession to power of the Labour Party; and they did not understand the Secretary of State's endorsement of the necessity, already plainly emphasised by the Government of India, for systematic and orderly progress, as opposed to sudden and violent change, in Indian affairs. Accordingly, Mr. Motilal's motion for the omission of the first demand was carried by 63 votes against 56. The next three demands were also rejected by narrow majorities, despite the protests of certain Independent members. On the next day, the 11th March, Pundit Motilal Nehru announced that the Nationalist Party, judging that they had established the principle for which they had contended, thought it unnecessary to continue the same procedure with regard to subsequent demands. A prominent Independent member of the same party, Mr. M. A. Jinnah, spoke to similar effect; further denying that there was any idea in the mind of the Nationalists of resorting to such extra-constitutional methods as a campaign

Speech of the Secretary of State.

A Political Protest.

of civil disobedience or an attempt to encourage the non-payment of taxes. On the 17th March, however, when the Finance Bill was to be taken into consideration, another member of the Nationalist Party, Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya, opposed the introduction on general political grounds. There were distinct signs that the refusal of leave to introduce did not commend itself to a number of elected members, who were impressed by the consideration that since the House had voted the immense preponderance of the budget items they could hardly, with due regard to consistency, refuse the means for the expenditure they had already sanctioned. The discipline of the Nationalist Party was however strong enough to secure the rejection of leave to introduce the Finance Bill by 60 votes against 57. As has been pointed out in another place, the treatment received by the Bill in the Council of State was very different. Not only did that House pass the measure without division at any stage; but some of its most prominent elected members emphatically dissociated themselves from, and severely condemned, the manner in which the Assembly had dealt with it.

The Finance Bill in the Assembly.

And in the Council of State.

Opinions may well differ as to the expediency, still more the defensibility, of the action which the Nationalist Party had taken under the lead of the Swarajists; but it is impossible to deny that the course which they followed was in form constitutional. The analogies cited from British History regarding the postponement of supply to redress of grievances, may have had in strictness little application to Indian conditions; but their influence upon the minds of the Swarajist leaders was abundantly evident. In short, in their treatment of the Budget as well as in their conduct during other episodes of the Session, the Swarajists must be considered to have played the part of an accredited constitutional opposition within the Council. As was forcibly pointed out on one occasion by a distinguished Independent member, Mr. Bepin Chandra Pal, the gulf which now separated the Swarajists from non-co-operation as understood by Mr. Gandhi was considerable. They had stood for constituencies created under the Government of India Act; they were conforming to the rules of the House which were also a product of that Act; how was it possible to maintain that they did not accept the Act at least as a *de facto* basis from which to advance? The justice of these observations was indeed amply borne out by the course of the session. The Swarajists, by their entry into the Councils,

The Swarajists as a Constitutional Opposition.

demonstrated that they were playing their part in the progress of the reformed Government; nay more, they were utilising the machinery set up by the Government of India Act to record a constitutional protest in a constitutional manner. It is indeed impossible to find clearer proof of the departure of the Swarajists from the fundamental principles of Mr. Gandhi's campaign than is supplied by the record of the proceedings of the first Assembly in which they took part. So far from indulging in the wholesale programme of obstruction and wreckage upon which they had at one time laid stress, they took a prominent part in the ordinary business of the House.

Defeats of Government.

Secure in the majority guaranteed by the discipline of the Nationalist Party, the Swarajist leaders and their Independent colleagues proceeded to inflict a series of defeats upon Government. Among the most notable of these may be mentioned the passing of resolutions calling for the release of certain political prisoners; for the repeal of Regulation III of 1818; for the imposition of a countervailing duty on South African coal imported into India; and for the appointment of a committee of enquiry into the Sikh situation. This last matter has bulked so prominently in the internal politics of India during the last two years, despite its predominantly local significance, that a short explanation is required.

The Sikh Situation.

In previous Statements mention has been made of the dissensions which have lately sprung up between different sections of the Sikh community regarding the possession of the many shrines of the Sikh faith which are scattered over the Punjab. The matter is complicated by the fact that most of these shrines have been for many years in possession of followers of the earlier Sikh Gurus (teachers),who differ little in their religion from orthodox Hinduism. The followers of the tenth Guru, who constitute the major strength of the Sikh community, have constituted themselves into a reforming sect, whose professed aim it is to redeem the shrines from the maladministration of their incumbents and to apply the proceeds for the spiritual benefit of the community at large. As we noticed in previous reports, the non-co-operation movement has exerted great influence upon the policy of the reformers; so much so indeed that they prefer to dispossess the hereditary incumbents of the shrine by a process of " rabbling " rather than have recourse to the ordinary legal methods. Towards the end of 1920, a body known as the Shriromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, or " Committee for the management of sacred shrines, " was set up. Sikhs of various schools of thought

joined the movement, and the Committee shortly acquired great influence. Owing however, to the methods which it began to employ, the Committee soon became representative of extreme opinion. It organised the Akalis, a militant puritan sect of the Sikhs, into a regular militia for the execution of its behests. Formidable bodies of Akalis, nominally peaceful in their methods, began to occupy, one by one, the shrines which constituted the bone of contention. Disorders arose, of which the most notorious was that which took place at the Nankana Gurdwara in February 1921; when the members of an Akali Jatha or band, were massacred by a force of armed men whom the Abbot of the shrine had collected for the purpose of defending himself. This caused a great sensation throughout India, of which the S.G.P. Committee did not fail to take advantage. The fact that Government were obliged to interfere to restrain the activities of the Akalis was represented as being a manifestation of hostility against the Sikh religion. The S.G.P. Committee was therefore enabled gradually to consolidate its hold over Sikh opinion.

The Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee.

Relations with Government.

During the course of 1921, the Punjab Government made repeated attempts to introduce legislation to satisfy the reforming party; but these efforts broke down in the face of the attitude of the S. G. P. Committee, which was undoubtedly much influenced by the non-co-operation campaign. Towards the end of that same year the Committee claimed a triumph over Government in the matter of keys of the Golden Temple, which were handed over to it since no Sikh body was prepared to contest its claims. Throughout 1922, the conduct of the Akalis and the methods they employed for the prosecution of their designs, threatened to constitute a reign of terror in certain parts of the Punjab; and the local Government was compelled to draft troops to the disturbed areas. Every endeavour was made by the authorities to show that they were animated by no hostility to the Sikhs who desired to reform the Gurdwaras; they were concerned only with the high-handed oppression which constituted a characteristic feature of the operations of the Akalis. Towards the end of 1922 occurred the Guru-ka-Bagh incident, which was dealt with fully in last year's Statement. It is sufficient here to note that a number of Akalis attempted to cut wood on land which was still retained by an Abbot, who had surrendered possession of the adjacent shrine. The offending men were sent up for trial on the complaint of the Abbot, and were sentenced to

The Guru-ka-Bagh Incident.

imprisonment. The S. G. P. Committee took up the challenge, and despatched a number of Akali jathas to Guru-ka-Bagh. These jathas were stopped by the police and dispersed as unlawful assemblies. A great sensation was created by the fact that the Akalis had taken a vow of non-violence, and offered no resistance to the measures which the police adopted for their dispersion. The matter was temporarily settled by the lease of the land in dispute to a private gentleman; but the prestige of the S. G. P. Committee was much increased by the incident. Many Abbots hastened to make terms for themselves by voluntarily surrendering the control of their shrines. Early in 1923, the Punjab Government made fresh endeavours to come to terms with the S. G. P. Committee by releasing the majority of prisoners who had been arrested for defiance of the police.

The Patiala-Nabha Case.

But in July 1923 occasion for fresh conflict was found in connection with the Nabha affair. Certain allegations of outrages on the part of officials of the Nabha State towards the officials and subjects of the Maharaja of Patiala had been referred in January 1923 by the Government of India for investigation by a judicial officer of high status. In anticipation of the findings of this judicial officer, the Maharaja of Nabha asked the Government of India to be allowed to sever his connection with the administration of the State. His Highness' request was acceded to and the administration of the State was handed over to the Government of India in trust for the Maharaja's infant son; the Maharaja binding himself to reside outside the Punjab and being permitted to retain his titles and salute and to receive an allowance from the State revenues. The S. G. P. Committee seized upon these occurrences to commence an agitation for the restoration of the Maharaja of Nabha on the ground that his abdication had not been voluntary, but had been forced upon him by the Government of India. Under the direction of the S. G. P. Committee, meetings were held in various localities pressing for the restoration of the Maharaja. One of these meetings was held in the Gurdwara at Jaiton in Nabha State. At this meeting, which was ostensibly of a religious nature, strongly political and seditious speeches against the administration of the Nabha State and the action of the Government of India were made. The local Nabha State official was eventually compelled to arrest the speakers and to break up the meeting. Certain of the persons arrested were engaged in performing the ceremony of continuous reading of the Sikh scriptures. But this ceremony was not interrupted; for the place of the man momentarily engaged in reading

the scriptures was taken by another individual who had undergone the proper purification ceremonies. The S. G. P. Committee, however, took advantage of this circumstance to allege that their action in interfering with the affairs of the Nabha State was dictated by religious considerations. Daily Jathas of 25 men were accordingly despatched by the Committee to Jaiton with the ostensible object of continuing the reading of the scriptures which the Committee declared had been interrupted. The Nabha State authorities had no objection to the holding of religious services in the Gurdwara, but demanded undertakings from the daily Jathas that seditious speeches would not be delivered in the Gurdwara and that they should conclude the service within a reasonable time. As such undertakings were not forthcoming, the daily Jathas of Akalis were arrested. These and other activities of the Parbandhak Committee were so frankly political in character, that the Punjab Government were obliged in October 1923 to declare the Committee an illegal association, and to arrest its members. The Committee however was reconstituted, and continued the daily despatch of Jathas of 25 Akalis to Jaiton. In addition to this, every attempt was made by strong propaganda to stir up the feelings of the Sikh community, both against the British Government and against the administration of those Punjab States which declined to allow political agitation within their borders. In January 1924, the Government again took action against the S. G. P. Committee, and arrested certain members who were engaged in holding a meeting. Every care was taken not to offend religious susceptibilities of the Sikhs; and the arrests were affected without disturbance. Nevertheless a fresh sensation was afforded. About the same time an attempt was made to repeat on a smaller scale the Guru-ka-Bagh incident. The small shrine at Bhai Pheru in the Lahore district had been surrendered by its Abbot some time previously to the S. G. P. Committee, in whose favour the Deputy Commissioner lately sanctioned a mutation of the management of the lands attached to the shrine. This mutation was made on the clear condition that if the Committee wished to eject certain tenants, who had from the outset refused to recognise its authority, notices of ejectment must be issued so that the tenants, if they so desired, could file a suit to establish their right to gain possession. These tenants were however forcibly ejected from their possession by a number of Akalis. When the authorities proceeded to arrest the aggressors, a series of Akali jathas were despatched to the place in order to repeat the offence. These were also arrested, and the process continued.

Bhai Pheru.

From the very first, however, the action of the Akalis was so contrary to the ordinary rules of propriety that little interest was excited on the part of the general public. But in February the leading spirits of the S. G. P. Committee attempted to bring the Nabha affair to a head.

The Jatha of 25 men which had arrived daily at Jaiton for five months past, and had been arrested without trouble by the Nabha administration, had proved itself to be an ineffective method of agitation. The Committee therefore decided to increase the size of the Jathas; and a Jatha 500 strong, vowed to non-violence and designated "shahidi" (martyr), was despatched from Amritsar at the end of January. It proceeded on foot to Jaiton, a journey of over three weeks, and arrived on the 21st February, the anniversary of the Nankana incident in 1921. Unfortunately, when the Jatha was within a few miles of Jaito, it was joined by a disorderly mob of several thousand persons armed with axes, swords, spears, and clubs. A number of bad characters carrying firearms also joined the mob, and this huge crowd advanced on Jaito, screening the jatha. When it arrived within a few hundred yards of the village, it was warned that if it did not halt, fire would be opened by the forces at the disposal of the Administrator. The mob was by this time in a highly excited condition, and this warning was disregarded. The crowd, worked up by now to a frenzy, charged down on the police and military posted to bar its progress. Several officials who had advanced to persuade the mob to halt were chased back to the troops at imminent peril to their lives. In order to stop the on-rush of the menacing horde of Akalis, fire was opened and the mob was dispersed with casualties amounting to 21 killed and 33 wounded. The firearms in the ranks of the mob were discharged and one Nabha villager was wounded while another received a bullet through his turban. The Jatha itself was not fired upon, but in the confusion casualties were inflicted on three or four of its members, who had mixed themselves up in the mob. Needless to say this event caused a profound sensation among different shades of Indian political opinion. The authorities were freely accused, first, of perpetrating a brutal atrocity; and secondly of misrepresenting the facts in their published announcements. The official account was however fully confirmed by a magisterial enquiry which was held a few days afterwards by a Sikh magistrate of the Punjab Provincial Service. A large number of persons were arrested; but all except about 100 of the worst offenders were released by the Nabha authorities. These persons are now under trial.

Several members of the Legislative Assembly were stimulated by the Jaiton tragedy to press for the adjournment of the House. The President ruled that such a proceeding was not in order, since the affairs of an Indian State were concerned. But on the 25th February a resolution moved by a Sikh member recommending the appointment of a committee to enquire into the grievances of the Sikh community, provided an opportunity for discussion. On the non official side, there was a general disposition to blame the authorities for their handling of the whole shrine question; and charges of apathy on the one hand and of inhumanity on the other, were freely brought. Government made it clear that they entertained no feelings of hostility towards the reforming party, but stated that there were ways of preserving the religious and social institutions of the Sikhs, which were preferable to methods running counter to good citizenship. The Government of India announced their intention of further prosecuting the endeavour to find a solution for such grievances as might be established by the Sikh community. The Assembly was not however satisfied, and passed the resolution in a slightly amended form. Meanwhile, the march of jathas to Jaiton continued, but as precautions were taken to preserve discipline, their members were arrested without resistance. Immediately subsequent to the period under review, the Punjab Government announced the appointment of a committee under the presidency of General Birdwood to explore the question of Sikh grievances with the object, if possible, of implementing Government's repeated efforts to arrive at a solution. Unfortunately, this effort proved barren of the desired result.

The Assembly and the Sikh Situation.

The first session of the new Legislative Assembly was adjourned at the end of March until a date in May, when a special meeting was fixed to consider the report of the Tariff Board upon the protection of the Iron and Steel Industries. As will have been apparent from what we have recorded, the Assembly session in Delhi was notable for more reasons than one. It exemplified in the first place, the growing tendency towards strictly constitutional action on the part of the Swarajists; and it revealed in the second place the virtual unanimity of Indian political opinion of all shades regarding the necessity for immediate constitutional advance. In this connection we may notice that in February 1924 there was held the second session of the National Conference, a body formed under the aegis of Mrs. Besant's National Home Rule League.

Outstanding Points in the First Session.

Desire for Constitutional Advance.

We saw in last year's Statement that at the first session of the Conference, held early in 1923, a number of committees were appointed to examine avenues for constitutional advance and to make definite recommendations regarding the legislative provision necessary for their attainment. In February 1924, these committees reported; and the results of their labour were examined. Under the leadership of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru it was generally agreed that the National Conference should follow the line of preparing the ground for a Royal Commission; and should aim at producing a clear and precise statement of the constitutional changes which India desired. Subsequently it was agreed that a deputation consisting of the Rt. Hon. Srinavasa Sastri and Mr. Iswar Saran should shortly proceed to England in order to lay before the authorities the desire of Indi for the speedy appointment of a commission of enquiry. It will thus be apparent that the desire for constitutional advance was by no means confined to the shades of political opinion represented in the Legislative Assembly. Further, the sentiments expressed in the National Conference were echoed and amplified in provincial Liberal conferences in various parts of India. It may therefore be asserted with confidence that the conjecture hazarded in last year's Statement as to the probability that the demand for Constitutional advance would shortly become a dominant feature in the activities of all Indian political parties, has been completely borne out by the events of the year 1923-24.

The National Convention and the Liberal Conferences.

APPENDIX I.

Sources.

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APPENDIX II.

SPEECH DELIVERED TO THE COUNCIL OF STATE AND THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY ON 28TH JULY 1923.

I am here to-day to address you on what must be generally recognised to be a most important occasion. This is the last day of this Session of the Legislature and the last day of the last Session of the first Legislative Assembly constituted under the Government of India Act of 1919. The close of this Session marks a stage in the working of those reforms. We have reached the end of a definite part or chapter in that gradual development of self-governing institutions in the Indian administration which is the declared policy of the British Parliament. We have advanced one step forward, an important step, in the progressive realisation of responsible government in British India as an integral part of the Empire. I pause to dwell on this point. I desire others to realise, as I do, what the end of this period means for India. It began by a momentous declaration of policy by His Majesty's Government who determined it to be necessary to give effect to this policy by successive stages and forthwith to take substantial steps in that direction. Since that announcement we have been travelling on that road, and we have now almost reached the half-way-house on that journey. We in India at this time will naturally desire to pause and appraise our achievement; but this stage holds interest not only for us—though it must have a special and intimate importance for us—but for a wider public. Of necessity at the close of this Session the British Parliament, upon whom lies the responsibility for the welfare and advancement of the Indian people, must look back and take stock, in the words of the preamble of the Act, "of the co-operation received from those on whom new opportunities of service have been conferred."

There is another aspect of the question. Our constitution enacts that on the expiration of 10 years after the passing of the Act of 1919 a Statutory Commission shall be appointed to inquire into the working of the system of government, the growth of education and the development of representative institutions in British India and all matters connected therewith, and to report thereon. In effect at the time stated the progress and achievement under the reforms are to be weighed in the balance for the purpose of determining the degree and extent of the next move forward. They are to be tested in the crucible for the alchemist to decide of what metal they consist and whether they ring true. I remind you that time is passing and that we have almost reached the moment when half that statutory period will have elapsed. The achievement of the Indian Legislature, and especially of the first Legislative Assembly in these circumstances, assumes a special importance. The work they have accomplished, the influence they have exercised, the example and experience they bequeath to their successors, all contribute to that atmosphere of success of failure which will surround the Reformed Constitution when the Mother of Parliaments sends her representatives to inquire into the working of the system of government.

To-day we are bringing to a conclusion the proceedings of the first Indian Parliament under the Reforms and we are assisting at the obsequies of our first Legislative

Assembly ; it is therefore meet and proper that we should review past action as we pronounce its funeral oration ; but we are also at the stage which precedes and heralds the birth of a second Assembly ; and we may for this reason also fitly assess our experience and hand on its fruits for the benefit of our successors.

I have spoken of the special interest which our proceedings to-day have for ourselves and for the British Parliament. They are also keenly watched by a larger public. No one can have failed to note the great growth of interest in the proceedings of the Indian Legislature which has been a prominent feature of the British Press in the last two years. Time was when the notices of Indian affairs in the British Press were few and intermittent. That day has passed with the reforms. Time was at the outset of the reforms, when a section of the Indian Press professed to ignore the deliberations of the Indian Legislature except for occasional and brief outbursts of malicious depreciation. Those days are gone. You may have your detractors ; you may have your critics ; but you have now everywhere created and sustained a vivid and living interest in your actions. You have made the Indian Legislature the mirror of events in India. All matters of importance to India are reflected in your questions and Resolutions. Before I pass to your achievements in the working of the reforms, I will examine the political situation regarding the reforms. Those who are opposed to the true interests of India and are blind to her position in the British Empire and to the mutual protection and strength those ties assure, have not been slow to allege that the reforms are of a transitory nature ; that they were the outcome of the political complexion of a moment ; that they have neither substance nor permanency ; that you live in short in a fool's paradise whose palaces and gardens will vanish in the twinkling of an eye like the passing of a mirage. Nothing could be more untrue. I came to India immediately after the initiation of the Reformed Constitution, pledged to carry on that constitution and entrusted with special and new responsibilities by His Majesty as Governor General to that end. On me was the charge laid that it was His Majesty's will and pleasure that " the plans laid by our Parliament for the progressive realisation of responsible government in British India as an integral part of our Empire may come to fruition to the end that British India may attain its due place among our Dominions." A solemn declaration of policy had been made by His Majesty's Government to the same purport ; the legislation had been passed with the assent of all political parties in England. Since then there has been no change and there will be no change in the announced policy. It is the recognised policy of the British Government, however, constituted. There have been changes in Prime Ministers, changes of parties in power in England, changes in the personnel of the Secretary of State for India ; but the fundamental policy as regards Indian reforms has remained unaltered ; and it is the unshaken determination of the British Government to carry out those reforms not only in letter but in spirit.

There has been criticism of the illusory nature of the reforms. Those who wish to hinder the progress of India along her settled path have charged the reforms with being an empty shell without a core. They have termed them a dress giving only the trappings of reality to a dead body which had neither life nor force.

The achievements of the Indian Legislature have been decried. Their position and privileges have been ridiculed ; their motives have been misinterpreted. Their sincerity and patriotism have been attacked. Let history be their judge. I am confident that no difficulty will be found in sweeping aside those travesties of their

earnest and constructive labours; but this is not all. The Assembly itself has been at times despondent. There have been moments in this House when voices have been uplifted crying on the Reforms as a niggardly gift and a sham. My sympathy at all times is with laudable desires for constitutional advance and longings for a wider horizon; but when I examine the position the Legislative Assembly has attained, the use it has made of its opportunities, the effect and dignity with which it conducts its debates and the broader aspect of its powers upon the policy of the Government of India, I cannot but feel that the Assembly at times takes far too narrow and restricted a view of its potentialities and real influence; and I must suspect that sentiment on occasion tends to obscure reason and dims the vision of those solemn promises of the British Government and of the Charter of Indian liberties of which the Government of India Act is the repository. Weigh for a moment the influence and power of the representative element of this House against that of its predecessor, the Imperial Legislative Council. Compare the realities of its responsibilites with pre-existing conditions. Reflect on the establishment on a firm basis in this House of Parliamentary traditions and on their incalculable effect on the future.

I do not desire to enter upon a catalogue of the legislative achievements of the Legislature or to enumerate in detail those Resolutions or questions or recall those debates which have produced material results on the executive action of the Government. I prefer to recapture for a moment the atmosphere and the state of political feeling in India when I assumed my office and to ask you to judge how far this has changed and how far your influence and action have contributed to this change. When I first came to India I was at pains to get into touch with political thought, to hear grievances and study the Press so that I might acquaint myself with those matters which appeared to be a subject of general complaint. My impressions of the burning questions of the day in Indian opinion as gathered from those sources was as follows. In the first place, there was a deep tide of resentment regarding curtailment of liberties. The more progressive considered the statutory restrictions on the freedom of the Press to be unnecessary, unduly restrictive and incompatible with the spirit of reforms. The same exception was taken to a number of special enactments restrictive of certain aspects of political agitation and known as the Repressive Laws, and particularly included the Rowlatt Act. Strong views were expressed to me as regards the number of British troops employed in India, the strength of the Indian Army and the burden of military expenditure. The military position was represented as showing a total want of confidence in India and as strangling the material expansion of the country by weight of army expenditure. Though Indianisation had begun in the Civil Services, the absence of any regular scheme of Indianisation of the Army was quoted as a proof of the mistrust of Indians by the British element and as designed effectually to prevent the ultimate realisation of responsible self-government in India. A like suspicion was alleged to be at the root of the failure to associate elected representatives of the people in advisory capacities with the problems coming before the Departments of the Executive Government.

India was represented as dominated in fiscal matters by the British Government and by the economic interests of Great Britain. The stores policy of India was said to be dictated to stifle the expansion of industry in India, and accusations were levelled that its main purpose was to place the maximum amount of orders with

British manufactures. Finally, the bureaucratic Government were charged with having established for the perfection of their own ends an unduly complex and expensive administrative machine and with having expanded its activities in directions not desired by the Indian public and out of proportion to India's resources.

I need hardly recall to you how the case now stands in regard to those subjects. For I know that you count the measures, which have been adopted by my Government on the strength of your representation of public opinion in those matters, among the most priceless pages in your annals; you may perhaps feel that the policies you advocated are not yet in all cases fully accepted, but when you leave this House you may assuredly point to many grievances, which were the cause of much bitterness and suspicion, checked by you in their early growth and now lying strangled on the open road you have left behind you.

These achievements arrest immediate attention; but there are other matters to be mentioned, particularly as they relate to activities of a more constructive character which will, I trust and believe, have an important and beneficial effect upon the future interests of India. In the Indian Factories Amendment Acts, the Indian Mines Act and the Workmen's Compensation Act, the Legislature has placed on the Statute-book measures destined to protect labour and has taken a progressive view of that great responsibility which rests on its shoulders as the representative of a vast labouring population. The Indian Emigration Act, deals with the difficult problem of safeguarding the interests of Indians who may emigrate to find a livelihood abroad; and a striking feature of this legislation is that the final decision of measures for their protection has been vested in the Legislature itself. No measure before you was hedged about with such special difficulties as the law to abolish racial distinctions; but no rift occurred in the delicate web of compromise and goodwill; and the Statute is now with us—a permanent monument of mutual desire to work together to a common understanding. In the Criminal Procedure Amendment Act the Legislature brought to a successful conclusion a task of great magnitude and complexity which had occupied the energies of our draftsmen for nearly a decade. It will fall to few Legislatures to have to dispose of a measure of such difficulty and importance in the domain of the criminal law.

While at times sentiment has run high and some event has found the Assembly and the Executive Government apparently at opposite poles, these differences have seldom been perpetuated and friendly and frank discussions have frequently led in the end to better understanding.

Some differences unfortunately have remained. It was perhaps scarcely to be expected that at the present stage of the constitution every divergence of opinion between the Government and the Legislative Assembly would be composed by discussion. Often my Government has accepted the views of the Legislature notwithstanding that these did not coincide with those of the Executive. But a special responsibility has been laid by the constitution upon the Governor General in certain cases and in my judgment special powers are essential to the discharge of the duties of the Executive in the present state of constitutional development in India. Nevertheless the occasions of the use of these special powers should be and, I am happy to observe, have been rare. The most recent and notable instance of their exercise was in connection with the necessity for balancing the budget. The reasons for the action which I felt it incumbent upon me to take at that time have been published. My action provoked criticisms; I have no

intention of reopening the discussion save that I will add that in my opinion subsequent events have tended to confirm the wisdom of my original decision. The responsibility was grave and the decision rested with me alone. I trust that those in the Assembly who have felt and expressed themselves strongly on the subject will leave this House without any feeling of bitterness, holding to their opinion as their consciences may dictate and acknowledging the same liberty to others who may differ from them, among whom I count myself.

My Government have to acknowledge a continuous and solid measure of support in times of disturbance and agitation from the Legislature, and in general a steady influence exerted for the maintenance of law and order. I have said enough, I trust, to establish beyond controversy the real advance accomplished and to place beyond the power of depreciation the disciplined efforts to increase the well-being of the people of India which have characterised this, the first Indian Legislature.

Before I part from the Legislative Assembly I wish to pay a tribute to Sir Frederick Whyte who, with a knowledge and experience brought from the British Parliament and imbued with the ancient traditions of that House, has presided over your deliberations. I know that you would wish to be associated with me in offering a meed of appreciation of the technical knowledge, sympathy, patience and fairness of mind which have characterised his association with your Assembly.

For me as Governor General the first Legislative Assembly under the reforms and in my term of office must necessarily hold special ties of interest, and I must view its dissolution with no small measure of regret. My feelings on its disappearance are however tempered by the knowledge that I still retain without change the valuable services of the Council of State ; and I am sustained by the thought that I can continue to rely on the sobriety of judgment of this Chamber of Elders which with this Assembly formed part of the first Indian Legislature and on their support of the best interest of India in all matters that closely touch her well-being.

I had intended to confine myself to-day to a survey of the work of the Indian Legislature over the period of the life of the first Legislative Assembly and not to dwell on matters of recent occurrence too near to us to be judged in their proper perspective ; but before I pass to another part of my subject I feel it my duty to make some observations about Kenya which is at the moment uppermost in my thoughts and yours. The news of the decision regarding Kenya came to me and to my Government no less than to you as a great and severe disappointment ; for India had made the cause of Indians in Kenya her own. As His Majesty's Government has stated, this decision conflicts on material points with the strongly expressed views of my Government as laid before the Cabinet by the Secretary of State for India. India's representations were fully placed before His Majesty's Government and received most patient and careful consideration ; but we must record our deep regret that His Majesty's Government did not feel justified in giving greater effect to them. We are conscious that there were important aspects, perhaps not sufficiently understood by us, which His Majesty's Government were called upon to weigh and determine, and we fully appreciate and acknowledge their whole-hearted efforts to arrive at a fair and equitable conclusion. They have announced their decision and the Government of India must consider it and arrive at its conclusions. If submission must be made, then with all due respect to His Majesty's Government it can only be under protest.

We do not fail to realise the great difficulties in which His Majesty's Government were placed. They were faced with a conflict between two powerful interests. The deputations with great vehemence urged two completely divergent points of view. Between these two there appeared to be no ground for agreement on any point; and besides there lay on His Majesty's Government the grave responsibility for considering the unchampioned and inarticulate interests of the native population which form the great majority in the Colony. It is not easy in India with strong feeling for the Indian side of the cause to appreciate with real detachment the considerations which His Majesty's Government had to bring to bear on the difficult problem. Attention in India is naturally concentrated on the rights and claims of Indians, while His Majesty's Government have a larger field to cover and wider responsibilities to exercise; and we must remember that although the decision has disappointed us yet on some points to which we were strongly opposed, but to which the settlers party attached great weight, the decision is against them. On three important points decisions favourable to the Indians have been pronounced. His Majesty's Government have declared against the grant of responsible government within any period of time which need now be taken into consideration. Further, they have refused to countenance the introduction of legislation designed to exclude from a British Colony immigrants from any other part of the British Empire. In addition they have definitely rejected the principle of segregation. On the question of the future control of immigration no final conclusion has been reached. The principle stated is unexceptionable and as a declaration of policy it will be welcomed by Indians. We are, however, uncertain as to the precise method by which immigration is to be controlled, and how the control will affect Indians; but you may rest assured that I and my Government will use every effort to impress our views on this subject without delay upon His Majesty's Government.

It is unfortunate that the last days of the first Legislature should have been overclouded by events regarding the treatment of Indians overseas. Yesterday the Legislative Assembly passed a Bill enabling the Governor General in Council to frame rules, if and when he considers it desirable to regulate the entry into and residence in British India of persons domiciled in British Dominions and Possessions other than the United Kingdom. The principle of reciprocity had already been accepted by the Imperial Conference and therefore a Bill conferring powers on the Governor General in Council in his discretion to make rules for the purpose of enforcing reciprocity is in itself unobjectionable; but the moment selected for this legislation may in some quarters be regarded as unfortunate, especially when accompanied by speeches in favour of retaliatory measures. It is but natural that there should be a desire in your mind publicly to express your determination to befriend and support Indians overseas to the best of your ability, but I must express serious doubt whether your object will be effected by these means. Will their position be improved politically and materially by steps in the nature of retaliation? May it not have an opposite effect and make their situation more difficult? Have they been consulted? Is it their wish? Apart from other considerations, will it help India? I shall not dwell upon the subject. The Bill cannot reach the other Chamber this Session and meanwhile there will be opportunity for further information and reflection.

I have paused to-day to examine the progress of the first Legislature and the position it has attained. In the face of vehement and sometimes bitter opposition

you elected to give your services to your country and became Members of the Legislature, determined to devote your powers to attaining your aims and ideals by constitutional methods. You may not have accomplished in the short period all that you had hoped. You may perhaps find the place of progress too slow, but can you point to greater achievement for India during so brief a period of time ? Would other means have accomplished as much ? There are those who have set other ideals before them. Destruction, not construction is their avowed aim. They would wreck the Reforms. What have they accomplished for India ? What blessing have they brought to her people ? Have they brought harmony ? Have they brought security ? Have they brought peace ? What goal have they set before them ? By what road are they to attain to it ?

You need not meddle with uncertainties or speculate on the unknown. You know the port to which your ship is sailing. You have set your course ; the star by which you steer shines bright before you. The first stage of your passages lies behind you in your wake. You have learnt to work your craft. Whatever storms or dangers may lie before you, you are confident in this knowledge and by the help of Providence you will bring your ship in safety to its journey's end. It is in this spirit that I ask those who have the interests of India in their hearts to use their influence in the coming elections to help India forward by the only secure road to the attainment of her cherished desires.

APPENDIX III.

SPEECH DELIVERED BY LORD READING ON THE OCCASION OF THE INAUGURATION OF THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE AND THE FIRST SESSION OF THE SECOND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 31st January, 1924.

Gentlemen, when I last addressed you, the Members of the Indian Legislature, the last Session of the first Legislative Assembly was at its close. A new Legislative Assembly has since been constituted; and the Members of the Council of State and of the Assembly are now about to enter upon the labours of the Delhi Session, to face new responsibilities and to strive to solve fresh problems in the best interests of India.

Let me in the first place extend a welcome to all the Members. I see many who have already notable achievements to their credit in the annals of the Indian Legislature. They need no special word of welcome and encouragement from me because they are aware of the high regard I entertain for their services; and in my address of last July, I set forth my view of the supreme importance of their work to the development of self-governing institutions in India and of the great value of the influence and traditions established by them. I miss, with regret, from this assemblage the faces of others (of the same fold) who had rendered yeoman service to the cause of constitutional progress. I see many new Members before me. I wish them welcome and shall watch their work in their new environment with keen interest. In their new responsibilities they will find the fullest opportunity for the display of the highest patriotism and for the noblest work for the service of India.

Before I pass to review the work before the Legislature and the internal affairs of India, let me dwell on a few questions of importance outside India, but closely affecting her welfare. Progress towards economic recuperation in Europe proceeds but slowly and the reaction of commercial dislocation still affects India together with the rest of the world. Nevertheless, there are indications of activity and trade revival in India; and there is good ground for hope that her period of convalescence will be more brief in duration and marked by more rapid and steady advance to strength than elsewhere.

A treaty was signed with Turkey at Lausanne in July last and its ratification by the signatory powers at an early date is anticipated. Tension has been relieved in the Middle East, and the Treaty has been welcomed by responsible Indian Muslim opinion as affording a solution to many problems exercising their minds.

On the Northern boundary of India the traditions of amity, subsisting for a century past with her neighbour Nepal, have found a happy issue in a Treaty signed at Khatmandu in December last which is a legitimate cause of satisfaction to both the parties.

Beyond the North-West Frontier, India has another neighbour closely connected with her. The relations of India with the Kingdom of Afghanistan are conducted by His Majesty's Government and, as you are aware, a treaty of neighbourly relations exists between the two Governments.

I have read assertions recently in the press that these relations have been strained. There have been allegations on the one hand of the entertainment of aggressive feelings towards Afghanistan by His Majesty's Government and on the other hand of an unreasonable attitude on the part of that country. Our relations with Afghanistan, as I have said, are in the charge of His Majesty's Government. But there has been speculation in the Indian Press regarding these rumours, and considerations of propinquity and past intimate associations evoke a warm solicitude in India for the welfare of Afghanistan and for the maintenance of relations of amity. It is right in order to remove misconception in India that I should state that these rumours as to the alleged intention of His Majesty's Government and the alleged attitude of the Afghan Government are without foundation.

Certain questions have however been under discussion between His Majesty's Government and Afghanistan. Those discussions are now nearing a satisfactory solution. The discussions had their origin in outrages notably those at Barshore and Spinchilla committed on our frontier by Wazirs domiciled in Afghanistan. They were complicated by the execution of these outrages from a base in Afghanistan and by the removal of loot to Afghan territory. In some cases also the perpetrators were deserters from British Indian militia units who had found employment in Afghanistan. The raids were serious in their results. In addition to private losses, four British officers and 81 Indian Sepoys of our regular and militia Indian units lost their lives. Subsequent to these events, two Afghan subjects murdered two unarmed British officers near Landi Kotal and fled to Afghanistan where they were arrested by the order of their Government, but later escaped from custody. Meanwhile the members of the Kohat gang, who were not Afghan subjects, the men who had murdered Mrs. Ellis and abducted her daughter, made good their escape to Afghan territory.

In reply to the vigorous representations made by the British Government the Afghan Government admitted its obligations, furnished ample assurances and took action to implement them. Its action at first however proved abortive. The lives of British Frontier officers and the security of British Indian subjects depended upon the fulfilment of these assurances. But on our side His Majesty's Minister exercised patience and forbearance, as he was aware that the difficulties of the Afghan Government in securing effective results were greater than can generally be realised.

Before the close of the year his representations were successful; the outrages to which I have made allusion were completely liquidated. During the present month the active steps taken by the Government of Afghanistan, after inviting the co-operation of our officers, have ended in the rounding up of the Kohat gang who are in process of transportation to Turkestan. During the last few days Afghan troops have come in contact with the men charged with the Landi Kotal murders and in the encounter one of them named Ardali has been killed, though the other Daud Shah has effected his escape. Information has also been received that the militia deserters above-mentioned have been dismissed

from Afghan service. As delicate negotiations were in progress you will realise that it was not possible to make a statement about these developments at an earlier date.

Of the other murderous outrages committeed on our frontier in one case suspicion fortified by constructive evidence points to members of the Kohat gangs, having been among the perpetrators of the murders at Parachinar, while the murder of Major Finnis and of the two Indians accompanying him is still under investigation. Two of those implicated in the crime have been arrested and every attempt is being made to bring those responsible for the outrages to account.

Before I close my observations regarding the position of affairs on our Frontiers, let me acquaint you with the progress achieved in the solution of the problem of Waziristan. We have continued to pursue the policy adopted by us after most careful consideration and with the approval of His Majesty's Government. We occupy a dominating position at Razmak in the country of the Utmanzai Wazirs with our regular troops at the request of the Wazirs themselves. A circular road more than 70 miles in length, running from Idak in the Tochi past Razmak and through Mahsud country to Jandola, has been efficiently constructed in a short space of time. A second road fringing the Mahsud country on the south-east is under construction from Jandola to Sarwekai. These roads have been constructed in the main by the tribes. They are protected throughout the greater part of their length only by irregular forces—scouts and locally recruited Khassadars; and under their protection they are beginning to carry the trade of the country and to exercise the civilising and pacific influences which are the special and beneficent characteristics of a road policy. Except for a few technical troops, there are now no regular troops in Mahsud country. Military expenditure has been steadily reduced; and more settled conditions on the border offer good prospects of a more than temporary success for our policy. We should be unduly sanguine if we declared that our difficulties are at an end. Nevertheless in our judgment, arrived at after much investigation and deliberation, this policy spells the best hope for progressive improvement in the future.

You will remember that when I last addressed the Legislature, the position of Indians in the Empire was a cause of serious concern to me and my Government no less than to Indian opinion generally. Since then, except in directions to which I shall subsequently refer, the results of the labours of the Secretary of State, the Maharaja of Alwar and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru at the Imperial Conference have undoubtedly improved the situation. The Premiers of four Dominions have shown deep sympathy and expressed their earnest desire to remove the disabilities affecting Indians. There is good ground for hope that the attainment of a solution acceptable to India is only a matter of comparatively short time, except possibly in the case of Canada where there are some special difficulties. India most cordially appreciates their sympathy and encouragement; and I speak for India when I say that this recognition of India's position in the Empire is the source of high satisfaction to her.

The position in South Africa, however, is different. The Union Government has reaffirmed its unwillingness to adopt the attitude of the other Dominions; and in addition proposals for legislation which are expected in practice to affect Indians adversely have been brought forward. The Natal Township Franchise Amending Act, vetoed on previous occasions by the Governor General of South Africa in Council,

has again been passed in the Natal Legislative Council, and a Class Areas Bill has been published by the Union Government. Vigorous representations have been made by my Government which, we trust, will have success in regard to the Township Act. The Union Government have given an assurance that it is their desire and intention to apply the measure, the Class Areas Bill, if it becomes law, in a spirit of fairness to the interests and reasonable requirements of Indians. My Government, however, whilst welcoming the assurance, cannot rest satisfied with this position; and we shall continue our efforts to persuade the Union Government to incline to our view. We are aware of the strength of public opinion in India upon this subject and shall strive to give effect to it by all legitimate means within our powers.

The position as regards the Crown Colonies has materially changed owing to the acceptance of the proposal for a Crown Colonies Committee to be appointed by my Government which will confer with the Colonial Office on all pending questions including Kenya.

The late Prime Minister, Mr. Baldwin, has promised that there shall be full consultation and discussion between the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Committee appointed by the Government of India upon all questions affecting British Indians domiciled in British Colonies, Protectorates and Mandated territories. I hope for nothing but benefit from these discussions; and we shall gratefully take the fullest advantage of the opportunity offered.

As regards Kenya the views of my Government were explained at length by me in my last address to the Legislature and formed the subject of a Resolution issued by my Government in August last. While acknowledging the difficulties of the issues and the great care and attention His Majesty's Government devoted to India's claims, we did not conceal our feelings of disappointment at the result; and we reserved the right to make further representations, with a view to re-opening these decisions, when a legitimate opportunity offers.

At the Imperial Conference His Majesty's Government have given an assurance that, while they can offer no prospect of the decisions being modified—"Careful attention will be given to such representations as the Committee appointed by the Government of India may desire to make to the Secretary of State for the colonies." This assurance gives us the opportunity we have been seeking and is a substantial gain.

Following upon the decisions, statutory action has been taken as regards the Franchise question in Kenya. The Kenya Government has treated Indians on the same lines as Europeans and granted adult suffrage. Given communal Franchise, this method of working may be accepted, and it has now become law. It is open to our Committee, however, subsequently to make representations setting forth our contention that there are grounds for an increase in the number of seats to Indians and that in our view all voters should be registered on a common electoral roll. We shall continue to press our views by means of the constitutional channel opened to us by the assurance of His Majesty's Government.

As regards immigration, the decision of His Majesty's Government was stated in the White Paper in the terms of a general principle only; and His Majesty's Government issued in addition an instruction to the Governor of Kenya to "explore the matter further on his return to the Colony and in concert with the Governor of Uganda to submit proposals to the Secretary of State for the Colonies for giving

effect to that amount of control of immigration which the economic interests of the Natives of both dependencies require."

When we received a copy of the Ordinance, which had been drafted by the Government of Kenya and Uganda and submitted to the Imperial Government, we took immediate steps to urge the postponement of the introduction and consideration of the Bill until the Government of India were able fully to present their objections; at the same time we strongly pressed that the Colonies Committee appointed by the Government of India should also have an opportunity of examining the question of the restrictions on immigration embodied in the Bill. These representations were accompanied by a preliminary statement of our objections to the provisions of the Bill. We received in reply an assurance by telegram from Lord Peel, the Secretary of State, that the introduction of the Bill had been postponed at the instance of the Duke of Devonshire, the Secretary of State for the Colonies. His Majesty's present Government have now informed me that the late Secretary of State for the Colonies found the Ordinance unsatisfactory, and returned it to East Africa to be redrafted. At the same time he called upon the Government of Kenya for certain information regarding immigration and for an explanatory statement respecting the method proposed for the administration of immigration measures.

His Majesty's present Minister for the Colonies will await the reply to these inquiries and the revised draft of the Ordinance and will be guided by further information received when these documents are before him. Meanwhile he has given me an assurance that ample opportunity will be afforded to my Government to express their views, and that he will give his earnest attention to my representations which the Colonies Committee appointed by the Government of India may desire to make regarding the measure whether in the form of a Bill or of an enacted Ordinance.

I desire to express my deep obligations to the late and to the present Secretary of State for the Colonies for the consideration given to the representations of my Government which have received the continuous support of Lord Peel and his successor. The steps taken are strong testimony to the sense of justice and fairness with which His Majesty's Government have been animated in dealing with the proposals.

As regards events in India, the two murderous outrages which have recently occurred in Bengal have caused as deep concern to my Government as they have excited reprobation and abhorrence in the minds of all good citizens of every community. It is the primary duty of Government to vindicate the law against such outrages and to bring their perpetrators to justice; and my Government is entitled to look for the moral support and active co-operation of all sections of the public in the task. We owe to the families of those who have been victims our deep and respectful sympathy, but we have an even wider duty—the duty to safeguard others from similar calamity. My Government have for some time been aware of the existence of conspiracies having as their object the assassination of public servants and of the correspondence of persons implicated in these conspiracies with communist agencies directed by organisations outside India. It was out of question to permit these sinister designs to advance on their way to results that no process of law can remedy. Our officers, on whom devolve the dangerous task of the prevention and detection of crime, must look to us for at least that measure of safety,

so far as the law can give it, which their own services secure to the public. Punishment in cases of outrages of this nature is not an efficient substitute for prevention. It became necessary to take steps to confine certain of the persons concerned in these conspiracies under the provisions of Regulation III of 1818. The necessity for these measures has recently received tragic confirmation in the murder of Mr. Day and the injuries to three Indians who attempted to stop the flight of his assailant. I trust that these steps to combat an evil which not only destroys innocent lives, but is a menace to society as a whole and a grave obstacle to political progress, will command the approval of all those to whom security and progress are objects of vital and common concern.

Need I assert that it was only with the greatest reluctance that I assented to the use of these measures for the protection of the public and in the public interest? I am firmly impressed by the consideration that it is essential strictly to confine these special and extraordinary measures to extreme cases of emergency; and I fully appreciate and sympathise with the views of those who wish to protect the liberty of the subject with strict exactitude. In these days the strong light of publicity, both in the Legislatures and the Press, is brought to bear upon the use of emergency measures of this character; and this in itself acts as a safeguard against their abuse. Before any action is taken, I and my Government submit these cases to a scrupulously careful examination. If we decide that a case for arrest has been established and no other course is possible, in view of the serious character of the emergency, a warrant is issued. After the arrests in Bengal were made, as you are aware, all the documents and evidence relating to each individual have been placed before two Judges of the High Court for the purpose of thoroughly sifting the material on which action was taken, of submitting it to the technical tests of judicial knowledge and experience and of framing recommendations regarding each case. I shall myself re-examine the case of each man concerned with the greatest care in the light of the recommendations of the Judges in each case and with the assistance of their detailed scrutiny of the evidence and the documents. In this manner the greatest possible precautions will be exercised to secure that no individual shall run the risk of suffering injustice because of the gravity of a situation; and his right to an impartial investigation of a charge will never be imperilled by the immediate necessity for measures of prevention.

I attach great importance to the labours of two Committees at present engaged in the examination of certain aspects of the administration of the law. The first, which has been dealing with the subject of the Bar in India, is reaching the conclusion of its labours. The general question of the creation of an Indian Bar and special features of the varying systems in different Provinces in India regulating the appointment, practice and privileges of Advocates and Vakils attracted considerable interest among the members of the late Assembly and were the subject of a number of private Bills, Resolutions and questions. The whole problem has now been examined by an expert and representative committee; and their recommendations will be of special interest.

The second Committee is entering upon the task of the examination of civil judicial procedure with a view to increasing the efficiency of the machinery, and in particular of expediting the technical processes for arriving at the final decision in civil suits and for securing to the successful litigant the fruits of his decree.

Reproach for delay in these operations has been levelled at our administration, it is essential that for ends of justice and efficiency all cause for criticism should be removed. Any improvement, which it may be found possible to effect, will, I need scarcely point out, be of the greatest value to all litigants and as regards commercial cases will have re-actions of importance on the general commercial and industrial prosperity of India.

Another question of first importance connected with the administration is the problem of retrenchment. Though less than a year has passed since Lord Inchcape presented the report of his Committee, I am glad to inform you that most of the recommendations of that Committee have already been carried into effect; and the great benefit of reduction of expenditure will again be patent when the budget comes under discussion in the Legislature. Considering the far-reaching nature of the changes involved by the recommendations, the expedition with which they have been put into effect is to be commended. As you are aware, the reduction of troops as recommended by my Government on the basis of the report of Lord Inchcape's Committee was accepted in full by His Majesty's Government save in respect of the British cavalry regiments. As regards these regiments His Majesty's Government agreed to withdraw two, but not the third; as a result of discussion however His Majesty's Government have agreed to pay £75,000 annually as a contribution for the maintenance of the third regiment for a period of two years. At the end of that time, if the military situation is still unchanged, it will be open to my Government to raise again the question of the retention of the third cavalry regiment.

In addressing myself to the internal affairs of India I would remind you that a change of Government has happened in England within the last few days. In consequence, ordinary courtesy and also constitutional propriety render it incumbent upon me to refrain from some observations upon Indian affairs I should otherwise be tempted to make, until there has been opportunity for discussion with the new Secretary of State and His Majesty's Government. If, therefore,—contrary to your expectation—I do not express myself upon some matters, you will understand the reason. But it need not prevent my mak'ng some reference to the Reforms and the work before the Legislature.

With the institution of a Legislative Council in Coorg and the grant of representation in the Assembly to Ajmere-Merwara, the reformed constitution has become an integral part of the institutions in the smallest administrative units in this country. The attendance at the polls and the close contest between candidates during the recent Election demonstrate the increasing interest which the system claims from the electorate and the country at large. Within the walls of the Council Chambers parliamentary traditions have begun to be established. Representative institutions are being built up on a firm basis. The people of India are taking a share in the maintenance and activities of government which stands—as all civilised administrations must stand—for security against external aggression, for internal security by the maintenance of the law and the preservation of order, for the protection of the rights and liberties of individual citizens of every class and creed, for the development of the material and political welfare of the country and for ordered continuity of progress.

As you are aware, the policy of the Reforms in India was introduced with the approval of all political parties in England and all stand committed to it as the

fundamental policy in relation to India of His Majesty's Government, however constituted, and apart from other political controversies which mark lines of division in Parliament. It is not uninstructive in this connection to pause for a moment and reflect upon the succession of Prime Ministers and of Governments that has taken place in England since I became Viceroy nearly three years ago. Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, who has so recently attained his present exalted office, is the fourth Prime Minister with whom I have served during my period of office as Viceroy. None of these Governments has wavered for one moment regarding the policy of the Reforms in India. Each in succession has immediately accepted the policy of the Reforms as the rock-foundation of British policy in India. Governments may, and doubtless always will, vary as regards details of administration and may differ in opinion regarding the stages of progression and periods of advance; but the cardinal policy of the Reforms remains the same for all. It is the policy of the British nation and not of any party. I commend these facts to the consideration of those—if there be any—who may still regard the promises held out as illusory and never to be fulfilled.

I came to India charged with the solemn duty of carrying out those Reforms, inspired by the earnest desire to make them a success and imbued with the firm determination to carry forward the conception along the road to further stages in its ultimate development. I have anxiously watched the consolidation of the foundations. I have seen the first courses of the edifice of parliamentary institutions and traditions and I stand pledged to carry onward the erection of the structure and to continue the building in the full hope of its ultimate completion. But be it remembered that the successful issue of the Reforms cannot depend solely upon the intentions and actions of His Majesty's Government, or the Viceroy, or the Government of India, or of all combined. The future must largely depend upon the people of India and the actions of the Legislature.

A first stage was passed when the first Assembly was dissolved. My own appreciation of the value of the achievements of the first Legislative Assembly and of the Council of State was expressed in my prorogation speech. We have now entered upon a second stage by the election of the new Assembly. I look and hope for continuity of the new Assembly of the same valuable tradition, for continuity is an essential condition of well ordered political progress. A considerable advance has been made on the road. Many difficulties have been successfully overcome and obstacles surmounted by the Legislature. Differences have occurred, but I am convinced that these have left no bitterness in their wake. Opinions varied but there was a common objective, the advancement of India. To-day marks the opening of a new stage; it chances to happen at a specially important moment and when the future actions of this Legislature will be fraught with the deepest interest and significance to India. There is now a Government in England which numbers among its members some of the most ardent supporters of the Reforms and the most sympathetic friends of India. There is now a spirit in India, if I am to credit all I read, which is bent upon destruction of the Reforms unless it immediately attains that which it is impossible for any British Government to grant forthwith, that is, complete Dominion self-government. I am well aware that words are often used in the heat of political conflict which perhaps convey more than is really intended. Moreover, it is but natural that when faced with the res-

possibility of action there should be deeper reflection upon its true significance and probable consequences. I cannot foretell the future; I do not know what it holds; but I cannot conceal from you that the political situation in India in its constitutional aspects causes me some anxiety for the future of the Reforms. I should be doing a disservice to India if I failed at this moment to give expression to my views formed not upon a hasty or cursory survey, but as the result of as profound study and reflection as I can bring to bear upon a subject of supreme interest to me. In October last I sounded a note of warning which I must now repeat in the friendliest spirit but with all gravity. I spoke with the object of presenting the picture of the future, as I then saw it, to those in India who had not failed in their support of the Reforms policy, although they had on occasions, felt bound to oppose the actions of Government. You may remember that I adverted to the possible prospect, according to the then indication of events, of a check, which I deplored, in the onward progress of the Reforms. The possibility of this check has come nearer to us, indeed it is in a degree already with us in some aspects, although it has not yet happened and, I devoutly trust, it will not happen in the Central Legislature. If the position should become more acute in the Provinces, the Local Governments may rely upon my fullest support. I still wonder—as I wondered in October—what purpose beneficial to India will be served by any course destined to destroy the continuity of progress in the Reform movement. No change in the Constitution can be effected by legitimate and peaceful methods save with the assent of the British Parliament, that is, the British people. The British Parliament has already set up the machinery now in operation for some time past. It is working with efficiency through well ordered processes towards the creation of responsible self-government. It is difficult to conceive that any responsible body of opinion can ignore the purpose it has in view, or can desire to check its creative activities and to risk the injury which must result to the fine fabric already in process of being woven upon its looms. Nevertheless, I gather that there is a disposition in some quarters to believe that the hands of the British Parliament can be forced, and that a situation may be created which may impair the Reforms and thus cause Parliament to act contrary to their desire and better judgment. It may appear easy to impair and even to destroy and to re-create. Doubtless, destruction is always easier than construction. Violent revolutions have destroyed the institutions of nations. Neglect and apathy in other cases have induced their decay and extinction; but I beg you to remember that when influences of this nature have been set in motion, restoration and re-creation become infinitely more difficult and sometimes impossible. These influences make no appeal to the British people and the British Parliament would emphatically repudiate and reject them. Rather rest the real hopes of the consummation of India's desires in the promises already made and in the intentions already manifested and to be manifested by that great champion of liberties, the British Parliament. As a devoted friend of India, I am convinced that action based on reason and justice will alone prevail with the British people and will prove the only safe road to the ultimate goal to be attained. I feel sure that you will keep steadfastly in mind in the course of the deliberations of this Session that the eyes of all friends of Reform will be fixed upon the harvest which the Legislature will sow and reap. It is of the greatest moment to India at this juncture that her elected representatives, in the responsibilities of their present position, should make a wise choice as regards the course

they will pursue. I do not doubt that they are imbued by those ideas which have from the outset inspired this Legislature and that they seek the welfare of India. I earnestly pray that calm judgment and a desire for mutual understanding and good-will may characterise this Session of the Legislature and may thus carry India further forward to the fulfilment of her legitimate aims and aspirations.

APPENDIX IV.

Delhi, the 28th March 1924.

A Statement by His Excellency the Governor General of the reasons which moved him to pass an order under section 67B of the Government of India Act for certification of the Indian Finance Bill as recommended to the Legislative Assembly and the Council of State.

When the Budget for the year 1924-25 was introduced in the Legislative Assembly, the Hon'ble the Finance Member was authorised by me to announce that as our anticipations for the coming year indicated a Budget which would balance on the present basis of taxation and with the salt duty reduced to the former level of Rs. 1-4 per maund, the choice between that rate and any higher rate would be left to the Assembly. At the same time, my Government, with the full concurrence of the Secretary of State for India, made clear their view that a higher rate of salt duty at Rs. 2 per maund would be in the best interests of the country, since it would enable a commencement to be made with the reduction of the Provincial contributions in four Provinces, and would thereby secure increased provision for objects such as Education, Public Health and Industry, the furtherance of which is our anxious concern.

2. When the Demands for Grants under the different heads of expenditure were laid before the Assembly, that House saw fit to reject, without any examination of the expenditure on its merits and for reasons extraneous to the Budget, the Demands for the Customs, Income-tax, Salt, and Opium Departments, four of the main revenue earning Departments of Government. These four demands, on the retention of which the revenue of these important departments necessarily depended, were later on restored by my Government acting in accordance with the powers conferred on them by section 67-A (7) of the Government of India Act. The remaining Demands had in the meantime been passed by the Assembly with small reductions under two heads only. When, during the next stage of the Budget procedure, the Finance Bill was presented for the consideration of the Assembly, consideration was refused without examination of details, in spite of the fact that the majority of the Demands for expenditure under different departments of Government had actually been accepted by the House.

3. The position which resulted from the action of the Assembly therefore was that when the Finance Bill providing for the means of meeting the expenditure which it had already voted came before the Assembly, the Bill was rejected without consideration. The Finance Bill prescribes the rates at which taxation shall be levied under several of the most important revenue heads, including the salt duty, postage and income-tax, and the legislative sanction given by the Finance Act of the

preceding year for the collection of taxation under these heads would have expired on the 31st March 1924. In these circumstances it was my obvious duty, under the special powers conferred upon me by section 67B of the Government of India Act, to take such action as was essential for the interests of British India in order to enable the administration of the country to be carried on and to provide sufficient funds to enable the Government of India's Budget for the coming year to be balanced. It was with this sole object in view that I recommended to the Assembly the Finance Bill in a modified form containing only such provisions as were essential for the purposes above mentioned. The Finance Bill as recommended by me provided for the levy of salt duty at the former rate of Rs. 1-4 per maund, for the existing postal rates and rates of income-tax, for the continuance for a further year of the provision, agreed to by the Legislative Assembly last year, for the credit to general revenues of the interest on the securities held in the Paper Currency Reserve, and for the imposition of a specific duty on certain materials for match manufacture, which is required to safeguard the revenue (exceeding 1½ crores of rupees) derived from the present import duty on matches. Certain items, including proposals to reduce the excise duty and the import duty on motor spirit, to reduce the import duty on certain component parts of cotton-mill machinery and to effect other minor changes in the customs tariff, were omitted from the recommended Bill. These proposals, though of a beneficial character, were not such as I could hold to be essential for the interests of India. This Bill with my recommendation was presented to the Legislative Assembly, but leave to introduce it was refused. It was thereupon laid before the Council of State with a certificate by me that the provisions of the Bill were essential for the interests of British India and was passed by the Council without amendment. To this Bill as consented to by that Chamber I have signified my assent.

4. It is to me a matter of regret that the Legislative Assembly, to whom important responsibilities are entrusted in voting expenditure to be incurred by Government and in authorising the provision of the necessary funds to meet that expenditure, should have failed on this occasion to consider these important financial matters on their merits. The action which my Government was compelled to take to restore the four grants rejected by the Assembly and that which I have found it necessary to take in exercise of the special power conferred upon me as Governor General, have as their sole object the maintenance of the administration and the provision of the funds necessary for that administration to be carried on.

READING,

Viceroy and Governor General.

APPENDIX V.

Resolutions of the Indian National Congress, 1923-24.

This Congress places on record its deep sense of loss at the demise of Srijut S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar and Babu Aswini Kumar Dutta, who had rendered invaluable services in the cause of the Country.

This Congress also records with grief the death of Sjt. Hardeo Narayan Singh and of Pandit Pratap Narayan Bajpeyi, who bravely suffered imprisonment imposed upon them and contracted serious illness during their incarceration and preferred death to release under dishonourable conditions.

(From the Chair.)

"Resolved that the Committee appointed by the Delhi session of the Congress do call for further opinion on the draft of and criticisms on the Indian National Pact and submit for further report by the 31st March, 1924, to the All-India Congress Committee for its consideration and Sardar Amarsingh of Jhabbal be included in the place of Sardar Mehtab Singh who is now in jail."

(Moved by: Pt. Motilal Nehru.)

(Seconded by: Srimati Sarojini Naidu.)

The triple Boycott.

This Congress reaffirms the Non-co-operation resolutions adopted at Calcutta, Nagpur, Ahmedabad, Gaya and Delhi.

Since doubts have been raised by reason of the Non-co-operation resolution adopted at Delhi with regard to Council-entry whether there has been any change in the policy of the Congress regarding the triple boycott, this Congress affirms that the principle and policy of that boycott remain unaltered.

This Congress further declares that the said principle and policy form the foundation of constructive work and appeals to the nation to carry out the programme of constructive work as adopted at Bardoli and prepare for the adoption of Civil Disobedience. This Congress calls upon every Provincial Congress Committee to take immediate steps in this behalf with a view to the speedy attainment of our goal.

Proposed by: Sjt. C. Rajagopalachari.

Seconded by: Sjt. C. R. Das.

Volunteer organisation.

This Congress is of opinion that in order to train the people of India and make them effective instruments for the carrying out of National Work on the lines laid

down by the Congress, it is necessary to have a trained and disciplined body of workers, under the control and supervision of the All-India Congress Committee except as regards its internal management. This Congress, therefore, welcomes the formation of an All-India Volunteer Organisation and accords it its full support.

Separate Congress Departments.

Resolved that this Congress hereby calls upon its Working Committee to prepare and submit at as early a date as possible to the All-India Congress Committee for its consideration, a scheme of organisation of separate Congress Departments for more efficiently, expeditiously and uninterruptedly carrying out the various items of the programme of constructive work under its supervision and control.

That the Working Committee should also submit a scheme of National Service of paid workers who would carry out the work of the various departments and provide adequate and efficient Central and Provincial Secretariats and local office establishments.

That this Congress authorises the A.I.C.C. to adopt these schemes with such modifications as it may deem necessary and to put them into force at the earliest possible date.

(From the Chair.)

Kenya.

" This Congress sends the greetings and sympathy of the Nation to the Indian Community in Kenya and while adhering to the opinion that unless Swarajya is won for India, the sufferings and grievances of Indians abroad cannot be properly remedied, it authorises Mrs. Sarojini Naidu and Mr. George Joseph to attend the forthcoming Indian Congress in Kenya and study the situation and advise the Indian Community there, as to what steps they should take in carrying on their struggle against the insults and injustices imposed upon them.

(From the Chair.)

Ceylon Labourers.

This Congress appoints a Committee consisting of Sjts. M. A. Arulanandam, A. V. Dias, Periasundaram and L. Muthukrishna to investigate into the Conditions of life to which the South Indian Labourers in Ceylon are subjected and to make a report to the Working Committee.

(From the Chair.)

Indians Abroad.

In view of the humiliating treatment accorded to Indian labourers in various parts of the British Empire, this Congress advises the people of India to consider the question of stopping all kinds of emigration from India for labour purposes and calls upon the Working Committee to appoint a small Committee to examine the matter in all aspects and report to the All-India Congress Committee.

(From the Chair.)

Akali Struggle.

This Congress declares that the attack made by the Government on the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabhandak Committee and the Akali Dal is a direct challenge to the right of free association of all Indians for non-violent activities, and being convinced that the blow is aimed at all movements for freedom, resolves to stand by the Sikhs and calls upon Hindus, Musalmans, Christians, Parsees and all people of India to render all possible assistance to the Sikhs in the present struggle, including assistance with men and money.

The Congress authorises the All-India Congress Committee to take all necessary steps in this behalf.

Proposed by: Srimati Sarojini Naidu (Bombay).

Seconded by: Dr. S. D. Kitchlew (Punjab.)

Satyagraha Committee.

Resolved that this Congress authorises the Working Committee of the All-Indi-Congress Committee to perform the duties of the Civil Disobedience Committee appointed at the Delhi Session of the Congress, and further resolved that the Satyagraha Committee do henceforward cease to exist as a Separate Committee.

(From the Chair.)

Sjt. Vinayak Damodar Savarkar.

"This Congress condemns the continued incarceration of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, and expresses its sympathy with Dr. N. D. Savarkar and other members of his family.

(From the Chair.)

All-India Khaddar Board.

It is resolved that an All-India Khaddar Board be formed consisting of Sjts. Jamnalal Bajaj (Chairman), Vallabhbhai Patel, Maganlal Gandhi, Reva Shankar Jagjivan Jhaveri, Velji Nappu, Belgaum Walla, Shaukat Ali and Shankerlal Banker (Secretary), with full power to organise and carry on Khaddar work throughout India under the general supervision of the All-India Congress Committee, and to raise funds (including loans) therefore in addition to the allotments that may be made from the General Funds. The Boards shall hold office for three years, any vacancies to be filled in by the rest of the members. A report and statement of accounts shall be presented to the A.I.C.C. at its annual meeting and whenever else called for. The Board will act as Central Authority on behalf of the A.I.C.C. with regard to Khaddar work and in co-operation with Provincial Congress Committees. It will supervise and control the Khaddar Booshs established by Provincial Congress Committees and organise new ones in Co-operation with the P.C.Cs. where they do not exist.

Proposed by: Maulana Shaukat Ali.

Seconded by Sjt. Vallabhbhai Patel.

Resolved that the following amendments to the constitution be adopted.—

Article II-(*a*) Instead of "during Christmas holiday" have "during the last week of December."

(*b*) This should read as follows:—

"An extraordinary session of the Congress shall be summoned by the All-India Congress Committee on the requisition of a majority of the Provincial Congress Committees or of its own motion, provided that in the latter case due notice has been given and the proposal is supported by two-thirds of the members present. The All-India Congress Committee shall determine the place where such session is to be held, and the articles of the constitution shall apply with such modifications as the All-India Congress Committee may consider necessary in respect of each such session.

Article III. This should read as follows:—

"The Indian National Congress organisation shall consist of the following:—

(*a*) The Indian National Congress.
(*b*) The All-India Congress Committee.
(*c*) Provincia Congress Committees.
(*d*) District Congress Committees.
(*e*) Sub-Divisional, Taluka or Tahsil, Firka or other Local Congress Committee.
(*f*) Such other Committees outside India as may from time to time be recognised by the Congress in this behalf.
(*g*) The Reception Committee of the Congress.

NOTE:—Provincial, District, Taluq, Tahsil or other conferences may be organised by the above Committees for educative and propaganda purposes.

Article V. Punjab and N. W. Frontier Provinces to be made into one Province. The number of Provinces to be changed accordingly, Delete tho last paragraph beginning with "the existing Provincial Congress Committees" to end of article.

Article VI-(*c*) should read as follows:—

Each Provincial Congress Committee shall consist of representatives elected annually by the members of the Congress organisations in the Province in accordance with the rules made by the Provincial Congress Committee.

(*d*) Each Provincial Congress Committee shall submit an annual report of the Congress work in that province to the All-India Congress Committee before the 30th November."

(*e*) No person shall take part in elections to any Congress organisation who has not paid his subscription within a time fixed by the rules of the Provincial Congress Committee for the purpose.

Article VII. "Add. The year of the four anna membership shall be from January 1st to December 31."

Article XVIII. Make the existing paragraph clause (*a*) and add:

(*b*) The accounts of the All-India Congress Committee shall be audited every year by an auditor appointed at the annual session. It shall be competent for this auditor to call for and inspect the accounts of the Provincial Congress Committees.

(*c*) The All-India Congress Committee shall take steps to ensure that the accounts of the Provincial Congress Committees are properly audited.

Articles XIX, Paragraph 1—Instead of "350" have "360."

Para. 4. should read as follows.

"The allotment shall be as far as possible on the basis of population according to the linguistic distribution of provinces as given in Appendix B.

Para 7. Delete whole para. Instead, have as follows:—

"Casual vacancies in the All-India Congress Committee caused by resignation, death or absence from India, or otherwise, shall be filled by the Provincial Congress Committee."

In present para. 8 change "15" to "30." Add to this para. "When once such a meeting is requisitioned and convened, additional subjects may be brought up for consideration provided due notice has been given to the members of the same."

Add after above para. another para. as follows:

"The quorum for the All-India Congress Committee shall be fifty."

Article XXIV. Delete article XXIV and have as follows:

The All-India Congress Committee shall, at its first meeting after the annual sessions of the Congress elect 9 members who shall, with the president, General Secretaries and Treasurers, be the Working Committee of the Congress and the executive authority responsible to the All-India Congress Committee in all matters.

All proceedings of the Working Committee shall be placed before the next meeting of the All-India Congress Committee.

Add the following Article below Art. XXIX.

At each sitting of the Congress the order in which business shall be transacted shall be as follows:

(*a*) The Resolutions recommended for adoption by the Subjects Committee.

(*b*) Any substantive motion not included in (*a*) but which does not fall under Art. XXIX of the Constitution and which 25 Delegates request the President in writing, before the Commencement of the day's sitting, to be allowed to place before the Congress provided, however, that no such motion shall be allowed unless it has been previously discussed at a meeting of the Subjects Committee and has received the support of at least a third of the members then present. Art. XXXI Delete the Article and instead, have the following:

"The All-India Congress Committee shall at its first meeting every year nominate a panel of 12 members to enquire into and finally decide all election disputes. The parties to the dispute shall nominate one each out of this panel to represent the respective disputants and the President shall choose the third."

Art. XXXIII. The proceedings of the Congress shall be conducted as far as possible in Hindustani, English or the language of the Province may also be used.

All other consequential changes to be made in articles and appendices.

Out-Going Secretaries.

This Congress places on record its grateful thanks for the valuable services rendered by the out-going General Secretaries.

Office-Bearers.

Resolved that the following office-bearers be appointed.

GENERAL SECRETARIES.

Pandit Jawharlal Nehru.
Dr. Saif-ud-Din Kitchlew.
Sjt. Gangadharrao Deshpande.

TREASURERS.

Sjt. Velji Lakhamsi Nappu.
Sjt. Reva Shankar Jagjivan Jahveri.

AUDITORS.

Resolved that Messrs. C. H. Sopariwalla and Co. be appointed auditors for the year.

NEXT CONGRESS.

This Congress resolves that its next sessions be held in Karnatak.

APPENDIX VI.

The following are the more important resolutions passed at the National Liberal Federation Conference held at Poona in Christmas week.—

Having in view the many inconveniences and anomalies which have been felt in practical administration under a system of dyrachy in the provinces and the incongruity and difficulty in practice of an irresponsible Central Government controlling and superintending the administration of transferred departments by ministers responsible to local legislatures, having also in mind the difficulties of the central Government having no majority of its own in a legislature with a majority of elected representatives of the people; and having further in mind the immediate necessity of releasing the Government of India and the local Governments from the control exercised by the Secretary of State for India and the proved inability of the Government of India, not yet fully responsible to the people, to protect the interests of Indians settled in self-governing Dominions and Crown Colonies, this meeting of the All-India Liberals, concurring with previous meetings thereof, is emphatically of opinion that full responsible government in the provinces and complete responsibility in the central Government except in the Military, Political and Foreign departments should be established without delay, and for this purpose urges the immediate appointment of a Commission similar that provided for in the Government of India Act of 1919 for making a full inquiry into the actual working of the present constitution and making recommendations in respect of future constitutional advance.

(i) This meeting of the All-India Liberals places on record its indignation and resentment at the Kenya Decision of July last which, besides being grossly unjust and invidious, violates the most solemn pledges of the Crown and other constituted authorities, and its firm determination which is likewise the determination to the whole of India, never to accept any settlement which assigns to their countrymen in Crown Colonies, particularly Kenya, a status in any way inferior to that of any other class of his Majesty's subjects. This meeting trusts that the Committee to be appointed by the Government of India in pursuance of the Resolution of the last Imperial Conference will be able to secure for Indians in Kenya a position in keeping with her recognised status as an equal partner in the British Commonwealth, besides safeguarding in an effective manner their economic interests.

(ii) This meeting further views with alarm the tendency of the provisions of the Kenya Immigration Bill and requests the Government of India, notwithstanding the unfavourable attitude of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, to press upon him the necessity in ordinary good faith of delaying the progress of the Bill through the Kenya Legislature until the Committee above mentioned should have had opportunity of examining the measure and discussing its provisions with the Colonial

Office. This meeting is further of the opinion that the Government of India should without delay appoint a strong and representative Committee and send it to England at the earliest possible date to raise the question with regard to the Kenya Immigration Bill with the Colonial Office.

(iii) In view of the facts that the political civil and economic interests of Indians in South Africa have been for generations without adequate protection, that at the present moment their economic status is further threatened by the imposition of restraints which are humiliating to this country as well as injurious to their interests and that the position of Indians within the Union of South Africa excepting Cape Colony has, during many years, been inconsistent with their status as subjects of a common Sovereign and with the national dignity of India, this meeting of the All-India Liberals strongly urges the Government of India and the Secretary of State to take effective retaliatory measures against the Government of that Dominion whose representative refused even at the last Imperial Conference to explore any avenue for the redress of the grievances of Indians, great numbers of whom were born in that country and own it as theirs. In particular, this meeting recommends the imposition on non-Indian South African Colonials of reciprocal restrictions and disabilities in respect of the franchise, both political and municipal, eligibility for the public services and right to hold properties and trade, mining and navigation licences.

(iv) This meeting strongly urges (1) an amendment of the Racial Distinctions Removal Act so as to deprive non-Indian South African Colonials in India of the special privileges still accorded to them in criminal trials, and (2) the imposition of a prohibitive import duty on South African coal, taking care at the same time by suitable measures, to provide adequate facilities to Indian coal in the way of transport and otherwise.

Retrenchment.

While taking note of the recommendations of the Inchcape and the various Provincial Retrenchment Committees, this meeting of the All-India Liberals calls upon the Central and Provincial Governments concerned to effect all possible economics and to lose no time in exploring further avenues of retrenchment.

Removal of sex Disqualification.

This meeting of the All-India Liberals is of opinion that the time has arrived for the removal of the sex disqualification in regard to membership of and franchise for the Provincial and Central Legislatures.

Separation of Functions.

This meeting of the All-India Liberals deplores the delay in carrying into effect a long overdue reform, *viz.*: the separation of Judicial and Executive functions and urges the Government to lose no time in giving immediate effect to it.

Labour Representation.

This meeting of the All-India Liberals desires to press on Government and Liberal organisations the need of encouraging the establishment of trade unions in the country and of labour being adequately represented in Provincial and Central Legislatures by direct election instead of by nomination as at present.

Protection to Indian Industries.

This meeting of the All-India Liberals is of opinion that Protection to industries of national importance should be given, the period, form and degree of protection depending upon the condition and prospects of each industry.

Repeal of the Princes Protection Act.

This Conference urges that The Princes Protection Act should be repealed as early as possible, as it is opposed to the interests both of British India and of the subjects of Indian States.

The Army.

1) This meeting of the All-India Liberals is emphatically of opinion that it is the duty of the Government to take steps for a more rapid training of Indian officers in all arms of the army including the Air Force so that the Army may truly be Indianised at an early date.

(2) This meeting of the All-India Liberals considers that with a view to expedite the Indianisation of the Army in the interests of national economy, a substantial reduction in military expenditure accompanied with a reduction of British Troops now used for internal security purposes should be effected as soon as possible and that in any case the recommendations of the Inchcape Committee in this behalf be given full effect to as a first step.

(3) This meeting urges that the report of the Military Requirements Committee should be published without delay.

(4) This meeting of Liberal Federation is further of opinion that Indian young men reading in Universities or Colleges should be made to undergo some military training and discipline.

(5) This meeting of the All-India Liberals further urges that no distinction should be made in the status of officers of the territorial and auxiliary forces and in the matter of granting King's Commissions.

The Salt Tax Certification.

This meeting of the All-India Liberals enters its emphatic protest against the certification by His Excellency the Viceroy of the Indian Finance Bill, 1923, providing for the enhanced Salt Tax in the face of the clearly expressed opinion of the Legislative Assembly to the contrary. In the opinion of this meeting, the Bill should not have been certified either on economic or political grounds. This meeting is further of opinion that S. 67-B of the Government of India Act is wholly inconsistent with any true responsibility of the Legislature and that even under the constitution as it is, it is necessary that the power of certification vested in the Viceroy should be strictly limited to genuine cases affecting the safety and tranquillity of British India or any part thereof.

Uplift of the Masses.

The meeting of the All-India Liberals is strongly of opinion that for the purpose of accelerating the process of nation-building, more strenuous, more sustained and more vigorous efforts must be put forth by the people and Government so as to bring sound and suitable education within the reach of the illiterate masses at an early date by means of compulsion; to improve their economic and moral condition by adequate measures, to raise their political status by a broadened franchise and in the case of the untouchables to remove untouchability which is a great impediment in the way of national advice. This meeting further calls up on the people to make adequate sacrifices to secure this object and the Government to find more money for the achievements of nation-building as quickly as possible.

Indianisation of the Services.

(1) This meeting of the All-India Liberals is of opinion that the real question on which it is necessary for the Government to have a definite policy for the future in connection with the Public Services is the question of the venue of recruitment.

(2) This meeting is further emphatically of opinion that in view of the fact that the traditions of administration established in this country by British Officers have been in full operation for over half a century at least and that many of the British Officers now serving in this country will continue to hold their appointments for nearly another 25 years, it is necessary both on economic and political grounds that recruitment in all Public Services should, in future, ordinarily take place only in India, power being reserved to the Government of India to recruit experts on special terms for limited periods.

(3) This meeting is further of opinion that the recruiting, appointing and controlling authority in future should be the Government of India and not the Secretary of State and that the Public Services Commission should be appointed by the Government of India to discharge in regard to recruitment and control of public services in India such functions as may be assigned thereto by rules made by the Government of India.

(4) That the basic pay of all these services should be on an Indian basis with special allowances to be given to British Officers on such conditions as may be determined by the Public Services Commission to be appointed hereafter.

(5) That in regard to any grievances of a financial character or of any other kind, this meeting is of opinion that they should be examined and redress given to public servants consistently with the financial capacity of the country to bear any additional financial expenditure; provided further that before any steps are taken in this behalf, the Legislative Assembly shall be taken in full confidence by the Government.

(6) This meeting of the All-India Liberals appoints Mr. C. Y. Chintamani to appear before the Commission to give evidence on behalf of the Liberal Federation.

Restatement of the Creed.

The object of the National Liberal Federation of India and of its component organisations is the attainment by constitutional means of Swaraj (responsible self-government) and Dominion status for India at the earliest possible date.

SWADESHI.

This meeting of the All-India Liberals strongly urges upon the people of India the urgent need of bringing into greater practice the doctrine of Swadeshi and calls upon them to make it a point to purchase Indian-made goods only, wherever possible.

INDIANS IN MAURITIUS.

This meeting of the All-India Liberals urges the Government of India to enquire into any legislation under the contemplation of the Mauritius Government which is understood to prejudicially affect the political representation of Indians settled in Mauritius and to take effective steps to safeguard Indian interests against any impending danger. And if our countrymen there fail to get their grievance redressed, this meeting is of opinion that further assisted emigration of Indian labour to that Colony be stopped as soon as possible.

APPOINTMENT OF OFFICE-BEARERS.

This meeting of the All-India Liberals appoints Mr. C. Y. Chintamani and Pandit Gokaran Nath Misra as Secretaries for the next year and directs that the All-India Council should be constituted in accordance with the lists to be submitted by provincial Liberal organisations by the end of January 1924.

PARTY ORGANISATION.

Whereas in the opinion of the Federation it is imperatively necessary that effective steps should be taken immediately to re-organize the Liberal Party so as to bring about greater solidarity among its ranks, to extend the scope of its influence and to increase its utility and to carry on an effective propaganda for the early attainment of responsible government and the securing of a status for Indians overseas compatible with India's status as an equal partner of the British Commonwealth, and whereas it is realised that these objects cannot be achieved without first raising a large Party Fund, secondly, without increasing its membership, thirdly without adopting a definite programme and policy for work, fourthly, without securing public support for that programme and policy and educating the electorates either by speeches or through the Press, English and Vernacular, or by taking other steps that may be necessary, this meeting of the All-India Liberals is of opinion that the work of organization should be entrusted to a Committee.

This meeting further revolves that 1. Dr. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapur, K. C. S. I. (Chairman); 2. The Right Hon'ble V. S. Srinivasa Sastry, P.C.; 3. Dr. R. P. Paranjype; 4. Mr. S. M. Chitnavis (Nagpur); 5 and 6. Mr. C. Y. Chintamani; and Pandit Gokaran Nath Mishra.—*Secretaries*, be asked to form themselves into a Committee with power to co-opt such and so many other members of the Party in India as may seem to them necessary.

This meeting directs that the abovenamed gentlemen shall pay visits to important centres in the country to interview members of the Liberal Party, to address meetings and to take all such other steps as may be necessary for the raising of the funds and increasing the membership of the Party and securing support for its programme and policy.

It further directs them to prepare a scheme of work by the members of this Party to be carried on among the electorates and the people at large.

It further directs them to consider the advisability of sending a deputation of two or three members to England at such time as may seem to them proper for securing support there to the programme for further constitutional advance.

And it further authorises the Committee to take steps for raising Funds for this deputation and also for the establishment of an organization in England for the dissemination of the views held by this Party and for securing the co-operation and support of English politicians and public men. It further directs this Committee to submit a report of its work to the Council of the Liberal Federation not later than the end of May 1924 and in consultation with the Council to arrange for the holding of a special session, if necessary, at such time and place as may be found suitable.

This meeting places the sum of Rs. 10,000 at the disposal of the Organizing Committee to enable it to carry on the work indicated above.

The Federation further authorises the Organising Committee to carry on the work of the Council pending its appointment, after which it shall be open to the Council to delegate all or any of its functions to the Organising Committee.

Next Session of the Federation.

The next session of the Federation be held at Lucknow in United Provinces.

APPENDIX VII.

THE REPORT OF MR. BALWANT SINGH, BARRISTER-AT-LAW, PUNJAB CIVIL SERVICE MAGISTRATE OF THE FIRST CLASS, WHO WAS DEPUTED TO INQUIRE INTO THE INCIDENTS THAT TOOK PLACE AT JAITO ON THE 21ST FEBRUARY 1924.

Under the orders of the Local Government I have held an enquiry into the unfortunate incidents that took place on the 21st February, 1924, at Jaito in Nabha State, in connection with the arrival of the Shahidi Jatha of 500 men with the announced object of resuming the alleged interrupted Akhand Path in Gurdwara Gangsar. I have examined as many as 56 witnesses, including the Administrator of Nabha State, Mr. J. Wilson Johnstone, the President and two members of the Faridkot Council of Regency, the military officers in charge of the operations that day, Lieutenant-Colonel J. C. Coldstream, Deputy Commissioner, Ferozepore, several raises and villagers of Nabha State, and some Akali members of the Shahidi Jatha.

Before going into the evidence given by the witnesses, it may be explained here that a batch of about 25 Akalis is being daily arrested by the Nabha State authorities at Jaito on their way to the Gurdwara to resume Akhand Path. They are usually non-violent in their character, but the declared object of the Shahidi Jatha, as its name implies, was a different one. It was to enter the Gurdwara and to resume Akhand Path at all costs and not to sheepishly surrender themselves like other Akalis to the usual arrests only on their way to the gurdwara, and even if they were once turned out, they would again and again come and in the attempt they would even go to the extent of losing their lives.

So the object of the jatha was unusually strong and a different one. At least it is obvious enough that a marked distinction did really exist.

"OPPORTUNITY FOR DARING ONES."

From the evidence on record it seems that the announcement of the formation of such a jatha was indeed great news for the Akali public and for the Nabha people. If was an opportunity for the daring ones to come to the forefront, get themselves enlisted in the ranks of the jatha, and to do something practically. It was also welcome news for the extremist section of the Congress, as is shown by the presence of Professor Gidwani and Dr. Kitchlew with the jatha. So the arrival of such a jatha naturally attracted large crowds at every halting place all along their way to Jaito. Some of them brought sweets and refreshments for them, others came as mere spectators, paid their durshan to the Jatha, and went away; but many more accompanied them, encouraged them and openly declared their intention of using force against those who happened to intercept the onward march of the Shahidi Jatha.

A member of the Shahidi Jatha, Jagat Singh, relates an incident of an offer of a subsidy of 500 men to the jatha. There is evidence to show that at Hari-ke-patan the Droli Jatha visited the Shahidi Jatha, but they were told to go away and replied that they would go away then, but would join the Shahidi Jatha either at Lande or Bargari. It appears that at Lande a large number of the Droli Jatha arrived, including many who visited Hari-ke-patan. In a dewan held there in the evening, a member of the Droli Jatha is said to have addressed the Shahidi Jatha saying that he had brought 500 men for their safety, but the Shahidi Jatha must arrange for their food in their langar, which was separate from that which was provided for ordinary people coming to see the jatha and which had up till then been exclusively used by members of the Shahidi Jatha. Accordingly the Shahidi Jatha fed them in their langar.

Droli Jatha's help.

Further there is also evidence that on their way from Bargari to Jaito the Chief Jathadar halted the Jatha and addressed the Droli Jatha that the time for their work had come. There is evidence to show that the Shahidi Jatha, instead of proceeding to Samalsar according to their published programme, went to Lande village in the Moga tehsil, to which the principal members of the Droli Jatha belong, apparently with the object of obtaining help of all sorts from the members of the Droli Jatha. Lieutenant-Colonel Coldstream, Deputy Commissioner of Ferozepore, states that he received reports from the Tehsildar of Moga after the jatha had left its last camp in the Ferozepore district, that the Droli men had left with the Shahidi Jatha and some of them were armed with revolvers.

In spite of the statement that they were so mixed up with the crowd that it was hard to distinguish them from others, there is overwhelming evidence to show that they were really the leaders of the most noisy, yelling and disorderly majority of the mob following the Jatha. Ultimately at Bargari, in Faridkot territory the last halting-place of the jatha, the number of the mob swelled up between eight to ten thousand.

There is evidence to show that at Bargari, a large number of men belonging to Nabha State waited upon the Shahidi Jatha to reason with them and to dissuade them from coming in such large numbers and in that military formation. L. Izat Rai, a Member of Faridkot Council and other witnesses, state that the mob, after they had left Baragari, armed themselves with tambas (cudgels) freshly lopped off from trees.

Nabha Officials Preparations.

On the other side the Nabha State officials were making preparations for the reception of the Jatha. Their arrangements, as is stated by Mr. Wilson Johnston, were all for the convenient handling of these 500 men and their sardars, which were expected to be not more than 200 to 300, by splitting them into small parties by the use of barbed wires and barriers in order to facilitate their arrest. Even in spite of various reports which the Administrator received from time to time that a mob of Akalis were flocking round the Jatha in large numbers, he seems to have never thought that all this mass of uncontrolled individuals would really accompany the Shahidi Jatha.

Ten Thousand Akalis.

A deputation of villagers of Ilaka Nabha, as above-mentioned, requested the Shahidi Jatha to send away these big crowds, and especially the irresponsible Drolis, whom they feared most, and also that they were welcome to enter the gurdwara in batches of 50 at a time, but all this was to no purpose. There is evidence to show that the members of the deputation were not only ridiculed but were treated with considerable rudeness by the mob. On the morning of the 21st, a mob of about 10,000 Akalis, ranging on a front of half-a-mile in length, started from Bargari.

It may be noted that the mob was met by the State officials at the canal distributory within the Nabha territory and a notice was read out to them asking them not to proceed in such large numbers, but that they should come according to the proclamation issued, that is 50 at a time, on the condition that they would leave the Nabha territory after the Akhand Path had been finished. But they refused to listen to them and moved on and on. It may also be pointed out here that up to Bargari the Granth Sahib (Sikh scriptures) was in front of the procession, but from Bargari onwards it was removed to the centre and the band which had accompanied them was dismissed. There is evidence to show that this arrangement was deliberately made to prevent sacrilege in case of conflict, and the Droli Jatha took up the position on their flanks.

A Serious Situation.

As the Administrator never imagined that he would ever stand in need of using troops in arresting the Jatha, he had only some villagers, police and some men of the State Infantry with him. With the exception of 20 policemen, who were armed with smoothbore guns, all the rest had dangs. It was a little time before the Jatha came in sight, that one of the sowars and L. Izat Rai, a member of the Faridkot Council, warned him of the seriousness of the situation. He ordered a platoon of the State Infantry to go and change their lathis for rifles. Colonel Muirhead meanwhile arrived.

The clouds of dust and the consequent enormity of the numbers of the mob coming in advance of the Jatha, thus greatly excited in mood, the disorderly way in which they were advancing and the brandishing of all sorts of weapons with which they were armed, made the Administrator change his former arrangements and he issued orders to the villagers to withdraw from the scene. Realising the seriousness of the situation, Colonel Muirhead also called in a squadron of Skinner's Horse and stationed them on the left of the road from Bargari to Jaito to command a more central position, while the six platoons of Gurkhas were called closer in reserve.

A Disorderly Rabble.

The Shahidi Jatha was at this time totally screened and hemmed in by this disorderly rable, who seemed to be prepared for an onslaught. The Akali mob was at a distance of about 200 yards from the first barrier, when Mr. J. Wilson-Johnston, along with some other State officials, advanced to meet them and with outstretched arms shouted at the top of his voice, asking them to halt and to disperse, and repeatedly warned them of his being obliged to open fire in case they refused to do so. But they did not listen to him and defied him by making a wild dis-

The Administrator, once more observing the frantic rush of the mob to the left, ordered another three rounds of controlled fire. In the meantime Major Bell Kingsley, finding that a mass of Akalis was trying to reach Tibbi Sahib from the side where he had taken up his position with a platoon of the 1st-4th Gurkhas, fired upon them. He states that his men were also exposed to a great danger and some of the bullets from the Akali side actually fell at a distance of a few paces from him.

The Most Desperate Charge.

After this the mob faltered for a few moments, but when they had once gone out of control there was no receding. They swept on furiously under the leadership of Sucha Singh, mounted on a white pony with a drawn sword in his hand and issuing orders in English. This was the most desperate charge which they made. But Major Lorrimer and his 10 dismounted sowars completely dispersed them after two short bursts of fire. The Akalis broke up finally and had to be pursued for a distance by Colonel Muirhead to stop theirrejoining the party that had reached the Tibbi Sahib.

No violence was used in their final dispersal by the sowars and it was simply done to stimulate the flying Akalis into further efforts to vanish. The suggestion that it would have been much better had the authorities used some other force, say, the use of lathis instead of firing, is suggesting something which, in my opinion, could not meet the exigencies of time. The mob was, as has been shown already, armed with all sorts of weapons, including firearms. How was it possible to stop them by the use of a corresponding and rather unsuitable use of a force like that of the lathi ? It would have been still worse and still more impossible to disperse them in this way.

The Total Casualties.

From the evidence before me I gather that 14 Akalis were found shot dead and 34 wounded on the evening of the 21st, out of whom five died next day. The total number of casualties thus coming up to 19 dead and 29 wounded in all. Three wounded were brought in from Ferozepur by the police on the third day. Keeping in view the comparatively small number of casualties out of such a huge crowd leads me to believe that the force used was minimum and the firing was considerate. My view is strengthened by the fact that the party in charge of the Granth Sahib was deliberately left to proceed unharmed to the Tibbi Sahib.

Had the State forces directed their guns to the palanquin containing the Granth Sahib I think it highly improbable that it could have reached the Tibbi Sahib unmolested. This undoubtledly shows that the State officials had no intention to fire upon the Shahidi Jatha if they did not resort to any violence. The Shahidi Jatha lost a few of its members only on account of its being thoroughly hemmed in and screened by the stampeding mob, who were trying to capture the Gurdwara by a general assault.

Wounded attended to.

The evidence of all the witnesses, from the Administrator downwards, including the Akali Jatha men and the medical attendants on both sides, shows that after th firing had ceased all the wounded were properly attended to by the doctors and they

were all conveyed to the camp, after first aid had been rendered to them. The statement of Sub-Assistant Surgeon Kehar Singh, who had accompanied the Jatha, throws sufficient light upon the good treatment the wounded men were meted out by the authorities. He also tells us that he was provided with all the necessary dressing materials by the State authorities, and that he was in no way deterred from tendering medical aid to his men, nor was he or any of their medical staff beaten or ill-treated.

The authorities then arrested the Shahidi Jatha on the skirts of the mound on which the Tibbi Sahib stands, but they did not touch these who were in immediate charge of the palanquin of the Sowari Sahib and requested the party to convey the Granth Sahib either to the village dharmsala or to the Gurdwara to save it from the disgrace of its being placed on unclean ground. The party refused all terms, but they voluntarily withdrew at about 10 P.M., when some of the selected Sikhs of the State took the Granth Sahib to the village dharamsala with due respect and ceremony.

AUTHORITIES JUSTIFIED.

To sum up, it is abundantly clear that the mob and the Shahidi Jatha defied all efforts on the part of the people and authorities of the Nabha State to reason with them and chose an unreasonable course; that the mob was in an excited mood and armed with all sorts of weapons, including fireams, and prepared to see through the game. They all knew what the game was, and even went to the extent of insulting and assaulting the Administrator, and after brandishing the weapons they actually used the firearms. It was but natural, and the only course left to the Administrator was to order firing, which was done not too soon. The small number of the casualties in such a big mob shows that the firing was controlled and did not exceed the exigencies of the moment. The wounded were attended to at once, and but for the complicity of the Droli Jatha the unfortunate (affair) could not have happened.

(SD.) BALWANT SINGH MALWA,

Barrister-at-law, P. C. S.,

Magistrate, 1st class.

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